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ELIZABETH'S FORTUNE.

CHAPTER I.

A LIFT IN LIFE.

EVERY woman would have chosen to be a man, they say, had she had the choice. Not I, for one. I can never be sufficiently thankful to the chance which, in appointing my place in creation *not* among the men, made me free from such troubles as theirs—beards and shaving-razors, high hats, and the necessity in marriage of making the offer, and risking a No in reply.

I thought so years ago, when I was a girl and sold oranges outside the British Museum. "Begin at the beginning;" you couldn't begin lower than that, unless you began as a beggar. Of course I know now how much more genteel is begging than selling. I've seen great ladies worry the money, or the life, out of their friends (whom the mendicity laws utterly fail to protect), in behalf of beneficent societies, benefiting no one to speak of, except the paid secretaries and collectors. But at fifteen I had all this still to learn, and, as an orange-seller, took precedence of the old woman with a bundle of rags wrapped up in her shawl, to personate a baby, for whose dear sake she got pennies out of the passers-by: one of a set that haunt the outskirts of the Russell Street palace of learning. Why, I never could discover. Learned folk are not more flush of money than unlearned. That, I did discover. All day long I watched them ambling in and out. Empty pockets, and more in their heads than they could carry comfortably. As for the learned ladies, as not one in ten of them seemed able to afford a nice-looking gown to her own back, it wasn't likely they would have much to give away.

Although I drove a poor trade, I didn't worry about the future, since a clever crossing-sweeper, who told fortunes then for a penny and got taken up for that, but is now a medium at a guinea a *séance*, and largely consulted by our betters on the sly, promised me I should certainly rise in the world. True, she had

said that to little Judy, the dustman's daughter, who took afterwards to the tight-rope, and was thus lifted up over our heads—but the spirits will have their practical jokes!

One foggy day—fog and oranges don't agree—business was so slack that I left my basket and leaned against the railings, side by side with Tim the match-boy, a young shaver I chose never to know, even to nod to. Not that he begged. Worse, I more than half suspected his hands of a determination to other gentlemen's pockets—a mere suspicion; still, you must draw the line somewhere. But Tim was such a droll chap, and the day was so dull—I think I would have stooped lower for the sake of a good laugh. It was so foggy, too, that the fishmonger's boy and the milliner's apprentice over the way couldn't see us, and when none of your grand acquaintance are by to look on, which of you doesn't unbend sometimes?

"Betsy," he said, "here comes a hearse. Undertaker been to look up the mummies in there, you bet."

It was a gentleman leaving the Museum. Such a long face, such a long coat, such long arms, such long white choker-ends, you never beheld!

"Parson," I corrected the little ignoramus.

"Sort that don't smoke," muttered the match-boy, whom experience had made keen in such matters.

From the parson's pocket protruded an inch of red handkerchief.

"Silk," muttered Tim, with an appealing look at me. I flatter myself I returned it with one that froze the little rascal's reprobate blood in his veins, but the coveted article's owner, in passing, did better by drawing it out—threadbare and full of holes.

"Never knew billies was in fashion in Noah's ark," muttered Tim, derisively. "Oh, s'life!" under his breath. "Thanks to your reverence!"

His reverence, in pulling out his handkerchief, had pulled out his pocket-book unawares; it dropped at Tim's very feet, whilst its possessor, passing on, was swallowed up in the fog directly.

Tim had it in his hand, and his hand in it, in a twinkling. Bank-notes crackled, his by adoption as I guessed, before ever he hissed in my ear, "Betsy, it's a fortune! Share and share alike."

Before the words were out of his mouth I had snatched the thing from him and darted after the lawful owner, shouting, "Stop thief!" by inadvertence. I soon caught up the funeral, very much excited and out of breath.

"Sir, sir!" I gasped at his elbow.

"Nothing for you," he returned sternly, taking me for a beggar.

"No, sir, something for *you*," I cried; but I had to thrust his property into his face before I could get him to look at it.

"Dropped, sir," I explained, delivering the leather-case into

his hands, and I saw him turn all the colours of the rainbow as he counted the notes. Five-and-twenty; his half-year's salary, as I heard afterwards, just drawn, and carried loose in his outside pocket. Such pound-foolish gentlemen, these parsons!

He turned to me, half-bothered, I fancy, and said:

"You are a good girl," severely. "Take this for your honesty," tendering twopence in coin of the realm. I could have cried, for I had made sure of a shilling at least, but he was such a queer figure as he stood with his hundred pounds clutched in his right hand, and holding out the coppers in his left, that I came near laughing instead. I drew myself up, and answered him firmly, out of a tract a lady had given me:

"Sir, I can take no reward for doing what was but my duty."

He seemed confounded. "Refuse twopence! The girl can't be altogether abandoned."

He looked me up and down, as if a thought had struck him, then muttered to himself:

"An orange-seller. Still, refuse twopence!"

I saw I had made an impression, and remained in the same attitude.

"What can you do?" he inquired doubtfully.

"Nothing, sir," I confessed without thinking.

"Neither read nor write? Scandalous!"

"Both, sir, and compound arithmetic, and physical geography, and parsing, and elementary science," I rattled off glibly. "Nothing that will keep me, I mean. I was in the first class, sir, when I was taken away from school, in the country. Father was a cabinet-maker, mother a dairy-woman. She left a good family, sir, to marry him. He died, and left her nothing, sir, but me. We got on as well as we could, which was as bad, sir, as well could be. But it's only the last six months, sir, since she's been dead, that I've sold oranges in the streets," I ended up, with a sob.

"Have you a character?" he asked.

I knew it was coming! I could have answered for mine without blushing, that it was good as gold; but where was the use? Don't tell me every one is supposed to be innocent until he's proved guilty. We poor folks are set down as lazy, dishonest, dirty, and intemperate, unless some one is by to swear to the contrary.

"Sir," said I, "the old woman who keeps me, in Hatton Garden, will tell you how I always brought her home faithfully all I took."

He only shook his head as he pocketed his portfolio. The notes crackled, which touched him.

"The fact is, we require an under-servant," he let out. "No wages, but a comfortable home."

Service, I found words to tell him, was the very thing upon

which my heart was set; money no object, but a gentleman's family. He wrote down an address in a neighbouring street, and gave it me, saying:

"Call to-morrow, that my daughter may see you. If you are deserving it is possible we may come to your aid."

All this came of refusing twopence! It was my first step on the ladder of fortune. A week later I was received into the household of the Rev. Barnabas Dulley, curate of St. Hilary's, Bloomsbury.

CHAPTER II.

MY SENTIMENTAL EDUCATION.

LAUGH, if you like, but for an orange-seller to get into a clergyman's family, though in the humblest capacity, is a step upwards. "Clergyman" or "nobleman" is magic music in English ears. Rank or respectability is what you want, to start with. You needn't have both, but without one or the other you'll never go far in this country. It has fallen to my lot to see plenty of clerical society since; I have learnt to look down on anything below a canon, or a rural dean at the least. But once upon a time I could look up to a curate, a perpetual curate, as my poor master, the Rev. Barnabas Dulley, promised to be.

He had one son, one daughter, a cook, a girl to do the work—that was myself—and a wife, who, although she had been two years buried, ruled the establishment. Don't you believe in ghosts? Mrs. Dulley's "walked" that house—the household's ghostly enemy. She had been a Beccles. I learnt that before I had been ten minutes in the place, which was peopled with photographs of herself and her relations, one of whom was twenty-fourth in direct descent from an early Plantagenet king. "What would Matilda have said?" was the test question my master put to himself before he dared pull on his boots or peel the potato on his plate. In ten days' time I felt that I knew her as well as if she had been my mistress in the flesh, as she was in the spirit, for I was under her just like the rest.

The craze of her life—a malady she had bequeathed to her family, in an acute form—was to keep up "appearances" on £300 a year. They only succeeded in making themselves thoroughly uncomfortable. In a large, rat-ridden house in Bloomsbury they mouldered away their lives, which was all they could afford to do with them there. But the *fig-end* of the lease was cheap, and the place was to come down by-and-by, so need not be kept in repair—that was out of the question. It had never been properly scoured and swept till I came to live in the family, but it had three-and-twenty feet frontage. The Beccles coat of arms (a Cock, armed, crested, combed and wattled—ruby; and a

Bull, statant, reguardant, argent, pied sable, collared and chained—or) was emblazoned wherever it could be, at a cost the Dulleys cheerfully stinted themselves in tea and sugar to defray. They would have lived upon air, I believe, if the saving would have enabled them to keep a carriage, though they never drove out in it. The son, Master Tom, was at Oxford College, to his own disgust, and at a frightful expense to his parent. He was making the worst of his time there, his sister sorrowfully said, but those three university years, for better, for worse, were indispensable to the finishing of a gentleman's education. He had been offered a good berth in the tea-trade, but—what would Matilda have said?

The Rev. Barnabas, or son of consolation—never was son so unlike his father as this inconsolable widower—was not so much to be pitied as he looked. Doleful as a mute, to all outside appearance, this left his mind at comparative ease. He set up for being eccentric—that's your genteelest cloak for thrifty habits! He received visitors in his dressing-gown, turned vegetarian by fits and starts, and forbade newspapers through his house. I was in a severe school of gentility, and got lessons in appearances, if I got little else for my services, except a slice of the cook's attic, long family prayers, and rather short than long commons. The cook was fond of whisky, but not of work, and as I did hers without grumbling, which left her free for her favourite pastime, she gave me no trouble, after the first. I could not, of course, associate with such a person, except professionally; it was my young mistress, Miss Alice, who soon became all the world to me, outside my brooms and saucepans. I never let these stand idle, and it may be that to this special industry I owed the special notice taken of me. "Why, Elizabeth, you're a genius!" sighed Miss Alice, when I came to announce I had mended the door-bell, and righted the window-sash, and the Rev. Barnabas pronounced my restoration of the ruins of the drawing-room carpet, "a perfect miracle." But they soon came to take such miracles for granted, till my master would bring me his spectacles to mend, set me to alter the cut of his dress-coat, and seemed vexed, and made me feel ashamed of myself, that I couldn't tune the church harmonium and solder the gas-pipes when they leaked.

Miss Alice was a sweet girl of five-and-twenty, who couldn't walk out of the house without me—a girl ten years her junior—to protect her. Poor Miss Alice! I pity, but have little respect for, a young person who can't learn to walk from Paddington to Mile End by herself without a scare. Sooner than that Miss Alice should set foot in an omnibus, the family would go without fires in a frost. She could never afford to go visiting in the country, because she must travel first class, because her mother was a Beccles. So she got no air, or exercise, but delicate health, bad headaches, and a sad complexion. It made you feel tired to look at her; the

least draught gave her cold, and the exertion of dressing herself knocked her up for the day. Would I be a young lady of poor but distinguished parentage! I required no keeper, and was sent on shop-errands far and near. I thanked heaven for my strong health, and that my mother was not a Beccles; though, to be sure, she was a Dickson; one of the Dicksons of Upper Farm, Brambledon—no connection, if you please, of Dixon the hatter in the town.

Miss Alice was so kind as to take an immense fancy to me, which was fortunate for us both, since I must be her shadow whenever she went out of doors. She sent for me to read to her in the evenings; she began to teach me one thing and another, and before the first year was out, came to treat me more like a sister than a servant. Perhaps it was getting no wages made the difference. "Elizabeth," she said once, pulling up in the midst of a confidential speech, as if to slip in a word of apology to Matilda, who, if she had been listening, would certainly have said something; "I don't know how it is, but you seem to me to talk and think almost like a lady." "Nor I, Miss," I answered humbly, but feeling as proud as a peacock all the same, as I knelt polishing, gently lest they should come off, the broken legs of the sofa upon which she lay; "it must come from living with you!" Yes, and provokingly little was there to be proud of in that. We women can adapt ourselves to anything. Like pencil-writing, easy to rub out and put in the contrary to what stood there before. Your shop-girl will make a better duchess than your shop-boy a duke, any day. And why? There's less to learn, and what there is, is more on the outside. Teaching me amused Miss Alice, who had few amusements handy and that cost nothing, and I made haste to learn all I could, before she tired of giving me lessons. It was funny to find how little I had to add to my own book-learning to overtake her in all that she knew. There was French, to be sure, and music. Of singing she taught me hymn-singing only, which was tantalizing, as she herself sang love-songs in four languages. But Matilda had said all music but sacred music was unbecoming for the lower orders, and there her daughter held firm. In books she soon relaxed. Sunday books we began with, but once at work on the tree of knowledge we quickly got beyond the list of the Christian Knowledge Society, until, for the sake of talking it over with me, she let me read everything she read herself. I needn't tell you that was all poetry and novels. I grew perfectly voracious, and got through an amount of printed matter in the first twelvemonth it amazes me now to remember. What with house-work, head-work and needle-work, my hands and my head were brim full, and it struck me that I, pauper orphan though I was, had a livelier time of it than my young mistress, who had finished her education eight years ago, and had nothing to do ever since.

"Dear Miss Alice," I ventured one morning, as she sat with her novel in her lap, gazing out of the window I was cleaning at the peril of my neck, for that room was none so cheerful but you wanted to see out of it; "are you not moped to death? In your place I should be."

"Why, Elizabeth?" she listlessly inquired.

"You get out so little," I explained; "you don't seem to care for housekeeping. All work and no play is bad, I know; and all play and no work may be worse; but no work and no play seems to me something not to be borne. Like a princess in captivity!" I concluded thoughtfully, scrubbing the glass pane as energetically as its crazy condition permitted.

"There's only one thing, Elizabeth," she returned, musing, "that is paramount in a woman's life, and that makes or mars her happiness."

"And that is love," I put in on the spot, in a hurry to show I hadn't read all those novels for nothing. I sighed. I had finished my job and went pensively about my business of dishing up the lunch, thinking aloud, in the words of the particular novel finished yesterday, "In the dawn of that superb new world, what would not be swallowed up and forgotten?"

What indeed? A sensible girl would have shaken her head, you say, and taken warning by the reflection that the mere thinking about it had made Miss Alice so careless of everything around her all these years, that she had never lifted a finger to mend what was amiss. But what girl ever yet took anything but example by another? As during the second year we grew more intimate, and I read fresh bushels of novels, I fell entirely into my poor dear Miss Alice's way of feeling and thinking.

She was trying to fancy her life into a three-volume novel, and it wouldn't take the mould. Some lives won't. There's stuff in them for a sermon, or a school book, but not for a romance. Miss Alice's might point a moral, but we wanted it to adorn a tale. In my poetical fits I compared her to the Sleeping Beauty. But she was merely nice-looking, and the years were getting on. At first I used to think, "If anything should happen to her papa before the fairy prince comes to wake her, what is there but the charity of friends between my young lady and the workhouse? He must be rich, too, who's to marry Miss Alice. No poor man in his senses would make her his wife." She couldn't put her hand to anything useful—menial she called it—and in all that concerned the management of the house was no better than a baby.

But there's no room in your head for these petty considerations when you sing love-songs all the morning, read novels all the afternoon, and talk them over with some one else all the evening, like Miss Alice; no room for anything but your Ideal—somebody whose path and hers were bound to cross somehow, sometime. I too had learnt to look upon his coming as safe and sure. We

believed in him as firmly as in the Day of Judgment. He was the other certainty. Meantime the ideal himself had changed pretty often, but the novels, I maintain, not we, were to blame for that.

My young lady treasured in her head, so to speak, a chamber of heroes, heroes of romance, with whom, as fast as I made acquaintance, I fell in love; and to this day our prime favourites stand out clearly before me. I look and I laugh, yet I think that I love them still.

There was Guy of Redclyffe, who won my first and best affections, as he had won hers at sixteen. A saint out of legend and a baronet out of Burke rolled into one. The quaintest mixture in nature or out of fairyland. An Abel with a dash of Cain promising to break out every now and again. The hero with tremendous passions, theoretically, and a squeamish conscience when it comes to practice; a creature you *couldn't* but adore, you know, if you could only chance to come across him.

Perhaps she despaired of that, for he had been shelved for years, and his place taken by one, two, and three. Foremost was Rochester — Jane Eyre's Rochester — bad, but reclaimable, with real virtues and real vices on a royal scale. Attractive in a book, like a lion in a cage, but, for my part, I had rather *not* come across him.

He too had had his day, and been superseded by one after another. I remember a manly amorous giant, with red hair, and no brains to speak of; a hero of whose virtues not much can reasonably be expected, but whose gladiatorial form, delicious and debonair, takes your heart by storm, if only to break it at the end of the third volume, by his wicked ways, or at best by some stupid blunder.

But his star was setting already, and his place, with Miss Alice, in a fair way to be filled by his opposite, known nowadays as the Daniel Deronda pattern, irreproachable in morals and manners, the hero who goes like a clock; a bit of a prig, granted, but you can't have everything; and of many drawbacks, say I, choose the least; so I sincerely agreed with Miss Alice in her choice, in her leaning to white magic rather than black. Right or wrong, it was no matter, since none of these magicians ever came in our way. We saw little company, in general, few men in particular, and heroes are not as common as grass. I grew downright jealous, for Miss Alice, of those girls in the story-books. The luck they have! If one of them goes for a country walk, sure as fate the hero-horseman comes clattering along by-and-by, and down comes the horse on the very spot where Miss can run to the rider's assistance. Let her go talking or reciting to herself in the garden, the lover, that is to be, is safe to be loitering behind the wall, and is smitten at once. Send her for a twilight stroll in the unlikeliest quarters, romance in the form of a great, beautiful, fair dragon is in ambush to waylay her. The contrast with the state of

things at home was provoking to a saint. The only person under that roof who had ever had a romance in her life was the cook, whose first sweetheart had shot at the second from behind a hedge. For Miss Alice I saw not the slightest opportunity. Her means would not enable her to dress up to the level of fashionable society, and if ever the question arose of mixing in homelier circles, it was self-evident that Matilda would have said No.

Conceive then, if you can, my surprise, my stupor, one day by mere chance to discover that she and her destiny had met at last. She had seen the being of her dreams, had Miss Alice, and become the object of his impassioned secret addresses. The only man on earth she ever could adore, in crossing her path, had planted his image there for ever. He was the supreme fact of her existence. Henceforward she lived upon the gorgeous madness of hope, which the sight of him might at any time convert into superb insanity of joy! Some bar—what, I puzzled to conjecture—existed to their union. This it was which had made her more dreamy of late, sing more love-songs than ever, read more sentimental novels, and neglect her poor humble friend, Elizabeth Adams.

Now I never read her letters. Few domestics can say as much for themselves. But correspondence left open on a desk you have to dust seems put there expressly to catch your eye. What caught mine was the beginning—"My only Love!" then some half-sentences as poetical as any ever set down in a novel. Finally the signature—Julius Hetherington.

It was enough. Julius Hetherington! I never asked myself to which type of heroes he belonged. I saw him distinctly, in the shape of the last of them that had bewitched our fancy; his figure faultless in its build, his features almost Greek in their perfection, his brow intrepid though calm, his dark yet luminous look, and redutive expression of grave authority. In spite of his proud, careless, slightly supercilious grace, you could see at a glance he was armed with volcanic passions, severely curbed. When he spoke you must listen as though the spheres were singing; his look pierced you through like a sword, and in his presence you withered up, shrank, and trembled like a fawn under the eye of a serpent.

How and when she first made the serpent's acquaintance I must wonder and wonder till she chose to let me know. But I felt as excited about it as though the good luck were my own, as sorry for the lovers' enforced separation.

Oh for a scrap of the luck of a story-book heroine! But when Miss Alice and I got caught in a crowd, if any one came to our rescue it was not Julius Hetherington but the police. She might recite verses in the back garden from morning till night; she would only put out her papa, writing his sermon. Another tell-tale scrap of paper, however, left exposed as before—this time it was *her* letter, just begun—told me they two had met again. Ten

delirious minutes, compared to which all the rest of her life was absolutely waste and worthless. She walked in a superb new world whose effulgence blotted out the sun. Away from him the colour was gone out of the sunsets, the music out of the birds. He was the die on which her universe turned.

Guess if I stared. Later I had a glimpse of his answer, not a whit less impassioned—"Meet you? Why, Love, I would go to meet you in a charnel, a prison, in death's dungeon itself." And, "Love like ours is a sun to which the poor material orb is but a dull distant star. Our whole world would be made dark by its extinction. What can life hold more for us than the certainty that your heart and mine can beat with no other love, no more than the aloe can know a second blossoming!"

All this romance going on, and not a word about it to me! And she had freely promised to tell me whenever the shadow of love should pass between herself and another! I was desperately hurt by this want of confidence, a slight I had done nothing to deserve.

The next thing was that I began to grow jealous of Miss Alice, and to wish my mother had been a Beccles. What a miserable prospect was before me, should I ever have a suitor of my own—some clown, or dry-goods clerk at the best—who, supposing he could write me anything of a love-letter, would be totally incapable of so beautifully refined a style. I grew discontented with my condition, thought less about my work, and more of novels, plays, and poetry—I had lots of Shakespeare by heart—and took to reciting my pet passages by night in the attic, when the cook was snoring in her sleep, which there was fortunately no breaking. Juliet in love, Ophelia gone crazy, Lady Macbeth inciting to murder—I was all of them by turns. If I couldn't go so far as to fancy myself a real heroine, I might make believe to be an imaginary one.

This Christmas Master Tom came home as usual from the University, where he had just been "plucked." His failure had not lowered his always boisterous spirits. He only wanted to have done with college, which he hated, for there was nothing to do there, he declared, out of the cricketing season. Plucked or feathered, his family had counted on his turning out a finished gentleman. A very unfinished gentleman he had always appeared to me, when he was at home, which was never when he could help it. My readings with Miss Alice had made me fastidious. This year the want of polish struck me particularly. He had such explosive manners, and a dictionary that strangely resembled that of Tim, the match-boy. There was no harm in the lad, nor anything else, worth the mention. He refused to dress for dinner, smoked in the drawing-room, and never thought of what Matilda would have said. "My mother spoilt him," sighed Miss Alice. "I believe you, miss," I rejoined, tartly, for he never seemed

to know what a door-mat or scraper was made for, and in sawing his bread cut holes right and left in the tablecloth, whilst nobody said a word.

Suddenly, not long after the vacation began, if this big booby didn't begin to look sentimental, to sigh, and grow graver and moodier every hour. Fresh from my last lessons, I jumped easily to the natural conclusion that he too had fallen in love with somebody. But what thunderstruck me was the discovery he presently took pains to make clear to me, that the somebody was Elizabeth Adams!

I soon got over my surprise. Where, after all, was the wonder? Kings have married beggars before now, if ballads are to be trusted. I could not make Tom Dulley kinglike, by any stretch of imagination; still it *was* condescension, in one whose mother had been a Beccles.

Up till then I had judged my young master very severely. He gave vastly more trouble, I thought, than he was worth, and, as his sister put it, he had "no conversation." But his plain hints of serious addresses flattered me into a more complimentary opinion. With the blinds down and the light behind him he might pass for a rough attempt at the young lion-cub hero type—being heavy and broad-shouldered, and lazy and muscular. It was not the style of all others I preferred, the big booby style; still I could hardly expect a Julius Hetherington to come courting me; and Tom Dulley was a University man, and his mother had been a Beccles—there! the gentility fever raging in the house had got into my head. I knew nothing against him; he had always been most civil and respectful to me, I took care of that, and as the victim of a hopeless passion for myself he became almost interesting. Of course I should have to plant a dagger in his heart by refusing him when he proposed, but our novel heroines invariably began by rejecting two or three of their suitors, and the idea of being the supreme fact of the world to anybody, the die on which his universe turned, and for whose sake he should live single for years or for ever, was not displeasing to dwell on, especially for a poor girl like me.

My first love-letter! It was awkwardly and unromantically conveyed to me in his right boot, where I found it one evening outside his door. I longed for the moment when I should be alone to read it. When at last the cook was asleep I lit a candle and opened the envelope.

But the hand was so bad, it was a task to decipher it, and the spelling—atrocious; yet that was nothing to the composition itself, which ran as follows:

"Betsy, you're a stunner, by Jove! and lick all the lady-swells I ever saw into fits. I'm dead gone on you, and you know it. If you're game so am I, and let's come along and get married before the world's a week older. No occasion to tip the wink to my gurnor, who'd raise the deuce of a shindy, you bet your life. I'll get a

parson of my acquaintance to marry us without any rumpus, and we'll just cut and run to Australia. Out there in the backwoods there's a chance for a fellow, and you and I'll get along like blazes—see if we don't.

"Yours devotedly,
"THOMAS DULLEY."

"What would Matilda have said?"

So long had I lived under her spell, that that was my first thought now.

Spelling, style, sentiment—would a carter have matched it? thought I in dismay! I was cured of nonsense for a while, I promise you, by my first love-letter. I vowed it should be my last from that quarter. I could have cried with mortification, only I couldn't help laughing, and then I had my answer to think of. I set about that on the spot, and found it came of itself; without pumping. I wrote:

"Sir,

"I am far from insensible to the compliment you pay me in wishing to make me your wife. But our union is impossible. The displeasure of your family, which you regard so lightly, would yet have been a dark spot on our felicity which might have poisoned the stream at its source, could I have requited your sentiments. That is out of my power. Since, then, I cannot bid you hope, it is certain I could not wrong you more fatally than by assenting to your offer of your hand.

"Yours respectfully,
"ELIZABETH ADAMS."

Quite a fine piece of writing, I thought, beside his own. Decided too. Poor lad! He might have done worse than marry me. He did, soon after. But that I could hardly have done worse for myself than take him, is certain. Go through life with "my mother-in-law was a Beccles," ringing in my ears? Not for Elizabeth Adams! So I put that note into his left boot, when, first thing the next morning, I placed his Balmorals at his door. The next thing was to go to Miss Alice and give warning. She was greatly distressed, and her father reproached me with ingratitude. "Sir," I reminded him, "I am an orphan of eighteen, with my bread to earn and a little honey on it, if I can. You cannot afford to pay me wages. I wish to leave at once."

When Master Tom heard of my intention he looked as black as thunder, which I fancy gave his father a hint. For the Reverend Barnabas suddenly turned round, decided I was doing wisely, gave me ten shillings and a character, and leave to go to-morrow, if I liked. Master Tom sulked like a spoilt child; but I took no heed of his dudgeon, lest he should think I was beginning to relent. I arranged with a poor widow, who kept a little stationer's shop, that I knew, for board and residence until I should find some employment; a search I was confident would not take many days.

It only remains for me to describe my parting with Miss Alice. We both cried. For in spite of her recent neglect it pained me

to leave her, and she seemed to mind as I never expected she would.

"What shall I do with myself, Elizabeth, when you are gone?" she said plaintively, "alone and with no one to talk to."

"No, no, not alone," I broke in hastily. "Dear, happy Miss Alice, I know all. You have a lover who worships the floor you tread on. You are parted, but the absence of Julius Hetherington must be dearer than the presence of Elizabeth Adams," I concluded enthusiastically, if somewhat obscurely.

"What do you mean?" she asked with faint embarrassment.

I frankly confessed myself, telling how, without prying, I had surprised her romantic secret. She was not angry; she blushed, half laughed, hesitated, then struck me dumb by a strange confession.

Those letters were her own composition, written to herself, by herself, in the name of Julius Hetherington, himself a creation of her brain, and in a disguised hand to facilitate the delusion. She had been, so to speak, her own love correspondent!

Now, this sort of thing might do for Miss Alice, but it struck me it was well for myself I was leaving—and not for a lunatic asylum! A girl who has her way to make must walk on her own feet and not go playing with flying machines. I felt as if I had been dropped from the clouds and half stunned in coming down. "Well, miss," I said thoughtfully, "it's not for me to advise you, but I think in your place I should try and be practical for a bit for a change."

CHAPTER III.

SUCCESS AND HOW I WON IT.

PERHAPS you may think I left that house no better off than when I first entered it. You would be mistaken. Love-lessons apart, had I not put three years' practice in housework of all sorts behind me? Just as all foreign gentlemen have to serve time in the army, so, think I, should all girls pass an apprenticeship in doing what they can in this way, to keep the wolf from the door. In times like the present there is no telling what lady, of whatever degree, who knows how to do her room, cook her dinner, and make her gown, may find these not the least valuable among her accomplishments.

Bent on rising, as ever, on leaving the Dulleys, I next aspired to become a nursery governess. Why not? Worse starters were in the field. If Tom Dulley had had me for his nursery governess he would have known how to spell Australia, I promise you. So I inscribed myself at a registry in the Strand, as a young person, cheerful, musical, fond of children, thoroughly domesticated,

competent to teach the rudiments of education, and accustomed to make herself generally useful. All true to the letter. But I met with no encouragement. Housemaids were brisk, I was told, and cooks lively in the extreme; but nursery governesses drooping and getting duller, a drug in the market, said the agent, facetiously, whenever I went to inquire, twice every day for a week, till my hopes and my half-sovereign were nearing an end.

I continued to go, for I liked the walk; because it took me past the Albatross Theatre, as a child likes the walk by the toy-shop or sweet-shop, though never a penny he may have, to go inside and spend. And I thought of the golden days before father died and our troubles began, when he often got orders from the stage carpenters and used to take mother and me.

The Dulleys thought plays objectionable when acted, though they might be read, even aloud. And had we not read them, Miss Alice and I, by dozens?—and all the best parts I had acted over and over again in my head, as I've told you.

So I never passed the Albatross without stopping for a good look at the advertisements, which announced,

"Every Evening
MISS ANNIE TORRENS,
as
Gertrude
in
'THE LITTLE TREASURE.'"

till one afternoon, a file of sandwich-men on parade there, gave notice of a change of programme:

"Production of 'CLEOPATRA'
To-morrow.
With elaborate new scenery, dresses, and effects."

As usual I stared my eyes out at the colonnade, then sighed and passed on my way along a side street. Just then a lady stepped from a side-door, walking in my direction. Her bright silk attire was never designed with a view to not attracting attention, and there seemed no rudeness in looking at her well. She was sweetly pretty, with a furze-bush of auburn hair where her forehead should be. Her face, half of it like a bird—the upper half—kitten-like below, struck me as something I was not admiring for the first time. She came hurriedly, excitedly along, and heedlessly ran up against me. So black she looked that I begged her pardon instead of returning her frown. This died on her brow and my apology on my lips, as we stood facing each other—not for the first time.

"Lizzie!" she exclaimed doubtfully.

"Why, Annie, it's never you!" I uttered in breathless amazement.

She and I had been girls together at the Brambledon village

school. Annie was my elder by five years, and at school she was nicknamed the Silver Spoon, because she always carried off the good-conduct prizes from girls who deserved them better; and directly she left, got engaged to a thriving grocer, named Tomkins, the only good match in Brambledon.

I had lost sight of her since. But I concluded that sugar and tea must be brisk, for she was dressed in the pink of fashion. Still, though young, I was too discreet to ask questions. I only said, with the sincere delight you feel at meeting an old friend again, or even an old enemy:

"How glad I am to see you looking so well, Mrs. Tomkins!"

"Hush!" she replied, mysteriously. "I am Miss Torrens now."

"Mrs.—Miss—how's that?" I stammered ingenuously, having always understood that was a step in life impossible to retrace.

"When my poor Tomkins'—" (What, Tomkins dead already, and Annie a widow?)—"business failed, two years after we married, I accepted an offer from a country manager to appear on the stage. Some of the Tomkins family, who are rather particular, objected to their name appearing in public advertisements, so I took that of Torrens instead."

"What!" I cried, awestruck, "then you are 'Gertrude,' the famous Miss Torrens whose name is in everybody's mouth!" I felt sure it must be, from seeing it printed so big. "Oh, Annie, Annie, the silver spoon again!"

She smiled, and took my arm familiarly, a piece of condescension that won my whole heart.

"Lizzie dear," she said confidentially, "good fortune will never make me forgetful of my old friends. So you think me enviable, do you?" and she tossed her little head. "Lizzie, whatever you do, never go on the stage. The more you succeed, the more you have to suffer. I have just come from rehearsal, and could cry. My brilliant position is threatened, my professional career checked; all through the spiteful tricks of a jealous rival, who won't have a hand lifted in the house except in applause of herself."

The distress in her tone went to my heart, and roused my deep indignation.

"What a snake in female form!" I exclaimed. "Dear Annie, tell me what mischief she has done."

"Slater—our manager—refuses to let me wear the costume I had made expressly for a scene in the new play, 'Cleopatra.' He says it's of another period; but that's merely an excuse. This woman is at the bottom of it. She knows that as Cleopatra's maid of honour, Iras, I shall outshine her as Cleopatra. Slater is her tool—and this is her revenge."

"How base!" I said. "But couldn't you alter it so as to leave no room for the manager's objections, at least?"

"Too late," returned Annie, with a real tragedy ring in her tone. "It's wanted for to-morrow. Some one would have to take it to

pieces and put it together entirely different from top to toe. Two days' work, at the least. I can't, and the stage dress-makers won't. That woman has them all under her thumb!"

"Oh, the creature!" I responded sympathetically. "Can no one help you, Annie? I'd sit up all night, with pleasure, to do it for you if I could."

"You, Lizzie!" she said dubiously. "Is that your line of business, then?"

"Well, not professionally," I confessed; "but these last three years I have been . . . companion . . . to a clergyman's daughter, and accustomed to put my hand to most things. You know I never beat you but in one thing in the old days, Annie, and that was at dressing the dolls. Where there's a will, there's a way. I'd work my fingers off to help you, if help you I could. As for that woman, your enemy, I feel that I hate her."

"How kind of you, Lizzie, to feel so," said Annie, drawing my arm closer within hers, and her brown eyes sparkled. "I'm afraid it's no use. But you shall step home with me, and see the costume; and I'll tell you all about myself since we parted."

"Annie, you're an angel!" I returned; feeling already as if paid in advance for any prospective exertions, by this promise of a glimpse into the world she belonged to. I was so proud to be seen walking arm-in-arm with a celebrated actress, that I felt sorry I had no London acquaintance, except the Dulleys, who were not of the right sort to appreciate the honour.

Tomkins, it appeared, was not dead after all. When after his failure he ran off to America, his wife, with resolution, declined to accompany him. To follow the fortunes—or as she shrewdly surmised, the misfortunes—of one who, she asserted, had dragged her into penury (her parents were both in a model almshouse) was what only a brute could demand. The sequel had justified her prognostications. Tomkins had failed for the second time in New York, and since then had had the proper feeling to drop written entreaties to Annie to relent, and come out and join him. She was doing uncommonly well on her own account—and, by her own account, rising high in her profession. She had no wish, she said magnanimously, to cast off her poor Tomkins entirely. He was a poor creature, but more to be pitied than blamed for his bankruptcy; and the allowance he made her, though it barely kept her in silk stockings, was, perhaps, as much as he could at present afford.

She lived in a crescent, not far from the theatre, and walked me straight up into her sitting-room. It was like the theatre placard over again, with illustrations. The walls seemed papered with portraits of Annie Torrens, in favourite parts, favourite dresses, and favourite attitudes; the table was strewn with flattering newspaper-cuttings, complimentary letters, and so forth. On the sofa lay somebody or something, covered with a sheet. It was

Irás' costume. She uncovered it, and burst into a passion of tears.

"Lizzie, Lizzie, isn't it a sin and a shame that they won't let me wear it? and all, *all* because Cleopatra lived too long ago!"

"It is, indeed, Annie darling," I rejoined, carefully turning over the ought-to-be old Egyptian garment, whose fashion, as even I could perceive, was too much like that of a Maid of Honour of to-day.

"In the good old times they wouldn't have minded. Didn't Mrs. Siddons act Lady Macbeth in a powdered wig, and usen't Juliet to be played in the latest fashion of the season? For my part I call that the most sensible plan."

"Yes, but they're so particular now," I said soothingly. "I see now what it ought not to be, Annie—Can you tell me what it ought?"

Annie exhibited a coloured design.

"I had it copied from a wrong one," she explained. "That was 'Roman' too, and I thought it would be all the same. But Slater says mine was two thousand years later. You couldn't make it look like this, I suppose?" she said wistfully, insinuatingly, reminding me for all the world of the Rev. Barnabas, when he came to ask if I couldn't do this or do that.

"Annie," said I, "I feel as if I could remove mountains, if that was all, just to disappoint that wicked woman, your rival—what is her name?"

"Charlotte Hope," replied Annie. "She's a perfect scarecrow, and would like to poison every pretty woman. Harsh features, complexion the colour of a guinea——"

"If we could make her out-yellow the guinea," I suggested.

"Oh, Annie, I burn to try. Do let me."

"Well, if you spoil it I can't be worse off than now; so try you shall. Take off your bonnet. You'll find the work-things in that drawer. As for me, I feel quite upset, and shall go and lie down, or I sha'n't be fit to appear to-night."

And she left me alone, with her robes and my reflections.

I had just twenty-four hours before me in which to succeed or to fail in the puzzle—how to turn a tight-fitting mediæval costume into loose-flowing classical drapery. I thought of the princess in the fairy-tale—set down to the impossible tasks of disentangling bales of thread and sorting a world of feathers. No fairy prince would come to help me through with the work I had voluntarily undertaken. One moment I repented my audacity.

But whilst I sat, and snipped, and stretched, and pinned, and pulled, and patted, and joined, and pieced, as if the world depended on it, an idea was taking possession of my head, that had been vaguely besieging it from the first moments after my recognition of my school-mate. Why should not I, too, go on the stage? Of course, I should never rise to the top, like Annie, but even she

must have begun at the bottom. The thought seemed by no means so mad as it would have an hour ago.

My fancy took fire; my future seemed to lie hidden in the convolutions of *Iras'* tunic and *peplum*. It was do or die. Unless I succeeded I should never have courage to ask of Annie the favour I wanted. She left for the theatre at seven, promising on her way to explain my absence to my landlady at the stationer's. She came home at twelve and went straight to bed. I sat up all night, and it seemed to me to grow light again in no time. Sleepy? Not I! No more than a girl at her first dance—with the sense that her social success is trembling in the balance.

At nine next morning, Annie, in a bewitching pink and grey dressing-gown, put in so anxious a face that I felt like a doctor who has sat up all night with a patient in a precarious condition.

"Well?" she said, with impatient eagerness.

"Annie," I spoke, "Miss Charlotte Hope may turn all the colours of the rainbow, and welcome. Your dress is saved."

The counterpart of the right picture was there before her.

Had I saved her life, her joy could hardly have been greater. "Lizzie, you're a conjuror!" she said, with tears in her eyes. "Breakfast's ready. You can spare time for a cup of tea now. You'll work all the better for it afterwards."

Though dead tired, I scarcely felt it, for the pride of having my tea poured out for me by a theatrical celebrity. She was in such a heavenly temper, too, as you are only when the weight of a great calamity has suddenly been removed. Now or never, I felt, was my moment to strike.

"I am sorry, Annie," I began, "that you speak so badly of the stage as a profession. More than once I had thought of it for myself; though, of course, I could only aspire to a very humble position. But what must be the miseries of the rank and file if leaders like yourself, dear, find the life intolerable?"

"Oh, it's well enough for the minors," quoth Annie. "Nobody envies them—nobody worries them. It's when you've got to the front that your troubles begin."

"Well," I resumed, "a celebrity there could be no hope—I mean, no fear—of my ever becoming. I should be quite content with a subordinate post. Do you think, dear, there would be any chance for me at the *Albatross*?"

"I'll mention it to Slater this morning," vouchsafed Annie graciously. "He's wanting some new supers, I know, and might as well take you on as another. But there's no accounting for managers' whims."

So Annie went off to the rehearsal, all smiles, and my spirits ran up prodigiously. Nobody, surely, could refuse her anything—my cause was in safe hands, said I, light-heartedly, as I sewed the embroidered border on her veil.

In an hour she returned, all frowns and impatience. Flinging herself into the arm-chair she exclaimed disgustedly:

"The play is put off till the day after to-morrow, and the rehearsal till to-night. The idea of their forgetting to let me know in time to save me the walk down for nothing!"

"That will give us leisure to put the finishing touch to Iras' dress," I reminded her. "Shall we rehearse that now?"

I waited till she had it on, arranged to the last fold, and had revelled well in her reflection in the glass. When I saw she was smiling again I inquired timidly:

"And did you remember, Annie, to put in a word for me?"

"To say the truth, I forgot. But you might go down to the theatre this afternoon all the same. Slater will see you on your presenting my card. You've time enough now."

"Oh, plenty," I replied, pretending to be calm, but her words had put me into such a flutter that, not to spoil my own handiwork, I decided not to touch it again till the interview was over.

My sleepless night would not improve my voice for a trial recitation, and my dress, an old one of Miss Alice's—though she declared it looked much better on me than on herself—was plain and shabby. I went first to my lodging, where, Annie having never delivered my message yesterday, they had made sure I had been run over and taken to the hospital, rested for an hour, and then set off for the theatre. Miss Torrens' card procured my admission at the stage door. I was directed down some steps, and told to wait. The descent brought me on the stage before I knew; and there I instantly encountered a sharp-featured gentleman, with sand-coloured hair, a colourless face, and a gaze that would have disconcerted a brazen statue. Mr. Shirley Slater, or the Old gentleman, my insight told me. He looked like criticism incarnate: yet, out of his managing department, some said, he was considered rather a dull man. But I did not know that, and trembled like a criminal when he asked me gruffly what I wanted. I saw I had stumbled upon him at an unlucky moment, but I managed to articulate that Miss Torrens had asked him to see me, and for what.

He seemed bothered, and as he scanned me from head to foot I saw "novice," "awkward squad," in every motion of his eyelid. Desperation gave me nerve:

"Sir," I said, "I am desirous of adopting the stage as a profession. I have studied——"

He cut me short.

"Let me hear your voice. Can you recite something?"

His purpose, I feared, was to get rid of me, by telling me I should never do. I still hoped to surprise him, and out of a string of dramatic extracts that occurred to me, chose the strongest:

"The Lament of Queen Elizabeth, in 'Richard the Third,' upon the death of her husband," I said, collecting myself. You

know the place—where the queen enters distractedly, attended by Lords Rivers and Dorset. Somewhat timidly I began :

“ Ah, who shall hinder me to wail and weep,
To chide my fortune and torment myself ?
I'll join with black despair against my soul
And to myself become mine enemy.”

“ Louder,” he said peremptorily. Obedient, I resumed, in a raised voice :

“ Edward, my lord, thy son, our king, is dead,
Why grow the branches when the root is gone ?
Why wither not the leaves that lose their sap ?”

“ Louder, louder,” he insisted. It seemed to me I was shouting like the town crier. I proceeded at the very top of my voice :

“ If you will live, lament, if die, be brief,
That our swift-winged souls may catch the king,
And, like obedient subjects, follow him
To his new kingdom of perpetual rest.”

Rapt as I was, I noticed, as I spoke on, that he seemed struck, and was considering me now with most serious attention. Elated to the skies, I let myself go, and concluded with a burst of passion that astonished myself :

“ Give me no help in lamentation,
I am not barren to bring forth laments,
All springs reduce their currents to my eyes,
That I, being governed by the watery moon,
May send forth plenteous tears to drown the world.
Ah ! for my husband ! my dear lord Edward !”

He was regarding me with frank interest, and intently. In an agony of suspense, but self-pleased at heart, I waited for what he was going to say.

What he said was this, gravely :

“ *Can you make a batter pudding ?*”

“ Rather,” I replied, not to be put out by a joke, as of course it was. “ Try me.”

He continued seriously, as before. “ Miss Fitzwilliam, who was cast for Lady Maude, in the new play, has thrown up her engagement. We are going to take her at her word. It's only a walking part, and with two rehearsals, I think we could pull you through.”

It was the proudest moment of my life. I, Elizabeth Adams, had made a powerful impression, at a first hearing, upon this experienced judge. I might have the making of a Miss Torrens, if not of a Mrs. Siddons, in me. I answered modestly that I would do my best, and trusted to justify his expectations. The batter pudding puzzled me still. Theatrical slang, no doubt ; that Annie would translate for me. I begged for my part to study. He laughed, and told me Lady Maude's part had been cut out ; but

she was to be left in, and the batter pudding was indispensable. Miss Torrens had the play-book, and would show me. I must study the scenes and attend the rehearsal to-night. Then if he found I could manage, he would settle affairs.

I thanked him for his kindness and condescension, adding that I had been too nervous whilst reciting just now to do myself justice, but if he should ever think fit to give me the chance, I hoped to show I could do better than that.

"Oh, my dear," he replied jocularly, but in a perfectly matter-of-fact tone, "with such a good appearance as yours, there's no need for you ever to open your mouth. Hold up your head, keep your eyes off the ground, and we'll not let you spoil the whole thing by talking, as you'd be sure to do if we gave you the chance."

It came on me like a clap of thunder, floored me nicely, and it took me all the walk back to recover the shock to my ambition. Never was any one so mortified by a speech intended for a compliment. I saw it all now. My declamation had had nothing to do with his offer. Perhaps he had been laughing in his sleeve at my earnestness. But just because I had a nice colour, and a tall, well-grown figure, and a fair-haired young head at the top of it, I was to have a trial. How I wished I had been plain and insignificant, to have been judged on my own merits!

I found Annie so busy with her bangles and sandal shoes, that I had to remind her of the errand on which I had gone.

"Well, what did he think of you?" she inquired indifferently.

"Not much," I sighed, and related what had passed, but omitting all mention of Slater's parting compliment, lest she should fancy I was vain of it.

She assured me that it was a grand thing to get taken on at once, in whatever capacity. Indeed, it was an extraordinary piece of luck, which she was quite at a loss to account for.

"He must have been terribly hard up," she mused aloud.

"That was it, no doubt," I rejoined, glad to show her I was not elated.

"And that Fitzwilliam girl leads him such a life! He was paid to engage her, he'd pay now to be quit of her, I know. Be as awkward, as ill-bred, as possible, Lizzie, you can't be very much worse."

This was real consolation. I set to work on the play-book at once, and plucked up courage for my coming *débüt*.

CHAPTER IV.

CLEOPATRA.

THE play "Cleopatra"—not Shakespeare's, as silly I had imagined—was a modern society comedy in three acts, written by a "dis-

tinguished amateur"—"distinguished in what, no one knows," said Annie. His name was Francis Gifford; it was his third play, the other two had both been dead failures, a lot of money had been spent upon bringing out this last, and the liveliest fears were entertained of its success.

I looked it through and through till I knew it by heart. A very old story, with a new hat and cloak. The story of the battle-royal between a star actress, with all the talents, and an earl's daughter, with all the virtues, for the volatile affections of a very middling specimen of the deceiver, man—much too much honoured, you would suppose, by such a scrimmage on his account, and between two such rare charmers as Cora the stage-queen, a beautiful serpent of deadly, irresistible fascinations, and his bride-elect, Blanche, a queen of society, and an angel, all but the wings.

Act I. Courtship.—Here Innocence, the Lady Blanche, had her lover, Purefoy St. John, well in hand, but the trail of the Serpent was about their path of roses, you could see, and a glimpse of the Serpent herself left you feeling decidedly uncomfortable about the Dove.

Act II. Marriage.—The Serpent, confronted with the Dove in her earthly paradise, tries treacherously to sting her.

Act III.—but I shall not anticipate. And it was no concern of mine. For I made sure that as Lady Maude, Blanche's hoyden sister, I had literally nothing to do but to wear a fashionable dress, which embarrasses no girl with truly feminine instincts, and in making the batter-pudding to form a background for Annie, whilst she cooked a chop, and Lady Jane, sister number three, peeled the potatoes. This was in a cottage-scene that closed the first act.

My first rehearsal! I was in such a tremble, as if I were going to be shot. My reception by the Albatross company was not reassuring. Chance had pitchforked me into the play; but if I bungled, or tripped, or offended anybody, I should be shot out as rubbish, for sure, without remorse. Who, pray, was Elizabeth Adams, that she should be considered?

Slater first took me over the stage, gave me minute directions, and asked if I thought I could remember. Remember! I felt as if dear life hung on my knowing my right hand from my left, the first, second, and third entrances apart. Then he put me through the scenes—it was like putting the pieces of a puzzle together—and said it was right enough.

He was furious because Miss Hope stayed away. There was a scene—the final scene—in which I was on the stage with her, and in which, if I put her out by the breadth of a hair, the consequences would clearly be disastrous. He read Cora's part himself. Neither the author nor the leading actor—Mr. Edwin Davenant—thought fit to attend, and those who did were out of humour

and careful to show it, stalking through their parts, as under protest at an extra rehearsal for the sake of myself and another new super. However, things went smoothly, and when all was over I signed an agreement to "play" Lady Maude at a salary of a pound a week, until further notice.

"There now, Lizzie, you're launched," said Annie, as we left together. "See what it is to have some one to say a good word for you."

"It's all your doing, I know," I replied gratefully, forgetting, in the flush of pleasure, that she had never lifted her little finger in the matter. "How can I ever repay you?"

"Well, you can do me a favour and advantage yourself as well," she answered, and went on to relate how, last week, she had discovered that her lady-housekeeper had been robbing her. They parted on the spot. She now proposed I should lodge with her, sharing expenses and helping her to keep house, until she could suit herself better.

I jumped at the offer—delighted. Early next day I bade an eternal farewell to my humble hosts at the stationer's, and came to establish myself under her roof, with but one thought in my head—"What can I do to prove my gratitude?" Write her letters, run her errands, do up her dresses, make her tea, wash up her tea-things, iron her lace, rub up her jewellery—she soon let me know. Delighted to find a lady-help, who would *not* be more fitly called a lady-hindrance, she found so much of the "general utility" business for me at home, that I barely managed to get to the theatre in proper time, that all-important First Night.

On arriving I was told that Miss Hope wanted to speak to me, and I must go to her dressing-room at once. Following correctly, as I thought, the directions given, I reached a door and knocked. A deep masculine voice answered—"Come in."

To my discomfiture I walked in upon three gentlemen, smoking round a table. Vainly I looked from the faces of the loungers for the leading lady I came to seek.

"I beg pardon, sir," I began, to the face which assumed the most wrathful expression at my intrusion, "I was told I should find Miss Hope here."

Suppressed laughter broke from the other two. The countenance I was accosting now took a really formidable aspect. The table still half screened the person of its owner, whose chair now was angrily pushed back, cigarette dashed down, and I saw what an awful blunder I had made. It was Miss Hope herself. Her short, crisp, dark hair, strongly-cast features, thin but muscular build, the loose jacket she wore over a black vest, had occasioned a mistake which was more my misfortune than my fault. She looked to me, even now, like three men rolled into one, and made the gentleman on her right, though tall, black-haired, and moustached, seem a boy-doll by her side. "Well, Elizabeth

Adams, you've done for yourself now," I thought in despair; "gone and insulted the tyrant of the theatre." I could have run, but that would have mended nothing.

The lady rose. She was tall, and I thought her gigantic. She was ugly, said Annie, and I can answer for it that appallingly so she appeared to me at that moment.

"Who are you?" she demanded, in a tempestuous voice.

"Nobody," I foolishly replied. "I—I am cast for Lady Maude in the new piece."

"Oh, Torrens' *protégée*," she said, in a tone of such disgust as made you feel ashamed of your existence, and forthwith resumed her seat, her cigarette, and her conversation with her friends.

"Torrens' *protégée*" was clearly no password to favour in here. All three, except for a critical derisive glance now and then, ignored me utterly. I must stay there, like a pigeon, to be shot at. What could I do? Look sheepish, or saucy, or glum? All bad. What I did, in self-defence, was to cram into those interminable minutes as many criticisms as they would hold, upon my tormentors. "Annie didn't mis-state your plainness, madam," I thought, to Miss Hope, "and I perceive possibilities of fury underneath, which make me understand how the Albattross may tremble at your nod." It was a treat to turn from her to her right-hand neighbour—surely one of Miss Alice's heroes in flesh and blood. With his slim, straight figure, slender features, shining black hair, and slightly foreign appearance, he looked as if some lady-novelist had composed him in a favourable moment, and came as near to your idea of Prince Charming as plain modern fashions permit.

He on her left was less easy to class. Good features, yet not exactly good-looking. An expressive countenance which yet, seen through its gentlemanly mask of arrant contempt, was no book a girl could read off at first sight. The forehead, the well-marked though light-coloured eyebrows, made a prepossessing beginning; the nose confirmed it, but the eyes put you on your guard; the firm-set mouth placed you at a respectful distance, and if you were timid you felt literally inclined to run away from so determined a chin.

They had forgotten me—or pretended it. Well—it was Miss Hope's fair revenge for my stupidity. At last the gentleman I have compared to Prince Charming dropped a word of remonstrance, and her eyes turned on my penitent form.

"What are you waiting for?" she asked.

"Your orders," I replied. "Mr. Slater told me you had some to give. If he was mistaken, please to say so, that I may go."

"There, don't tease the child," said her left hand-neighbour carelessly. "Tell her what you want with her, and let her go."

"Child—there it is!" exclaimed Miss Hope irascibly. "Upon

my word, Gifford, you authors are cool hands. Put a bungling beginner like *that* into a new piece, just before the curtain goes up? I could kill Slater for serving you such a turn!"

"My first two plays were acted by veterans," he answered composedly, "and got hissed all the same. They can't do worse than hiss me to-night."

She rose, and came towards me, throwing her words, like so many stones, in my face.

"You're a raw recruit, that I know."

"Yesterday was my first drill," I returned, trying not to wince, and reflecting that the worst stage fright would be a joke to this.

"With your cottage scene I have nothing to do. Mismanage it with Miss Torrens to your heart's content. Lose your head, and go out at the wrong door. If there is a wrong door, trust a novice to select it."

I did not contradict her, comforted by the recollection that there was only one door to this particular cottage.

"Now we come to the last moments of the last scene. Cora, standing, say, here," stationing herself near the door—"You there. Let me see if you know what you have to do."

Luckily I had my lesson by heart.

"Cora has her hand on the door, when she looks back at Purefoy and makes a forward movement, but is stopped by Blanche, who intercepts her passage. Meantime, Maude has advanced, and Cora's hand, stretched out for support, grasps hers. Cora withdraws it slowly, as she reaches the door—Maude following her up—and passes out."

Under her eye I must go through this bit of pantomime correctly, then, taking her nod for a dismissal, I escaped—as out of a wild animal's den, remarkably encouraged, as you may suppose, for my *débüt*, and thanking the stars that Annie, and not that virago, would be my partner in the cooking-scene—Annie, who would never storm, I felt sure, even if I went wrong. But go wrong I would not.

I put on my finery and came and stood at the wings, trying not to look as I felt, like the jackdaw among the peacocks, with his new feathers on. But were they not all jackdaws too, to begin with? Perhaps my plumage would get to look natural, even to grow, in good time.

"Don't you be fluttered," said Slater patronizingly, as he passed me just before the curtain rose. "You must go into the water, you know, to learn to swim."

And the stage-carpet might as reasonably have been nervous as I—from the moment that Annie, Lady Blanche, tripped on the scene, in a strawberry-and-cream-coloured dress, whose artful simplicity brought down the house and fastened all eyes on the wearer.

"Scored," drawled Slater jocosely, who was standing with the author near where I waited. "That's good for a favourable notice. See the critics taking notes directly."

"I counted on it," Mr. Gifford replied. "Always throw in the latest fashions gratis. It gives a play such a lift, with the ladies."

"Deuced expensive," muttered Slater feelingly.

"Pshaw! *De minimis non curat*, a high-souled director like you. Look to the end, man, to justify the means."

"Aye—if ever you get there. But she can't change more than once in the first act—Stand back, stand back!" This to me, peremptorily, as if some one behind me was going to shoot.

Back I stood, startled, and looked to see what was coming. It was only Prince Charming beckoning us out of the way—Mr. Edwin Davenant, that is, about to present himself before the audience as Purefoy St. John, a part for which he needed little make up, and no disguise.

"By Jove, he wears well!" observed Slater. "Can you look at him and believe he's close upon fifty?"

"Fifty!" I nearly cried out with incredulous surprise.

"He was at school with a father of mine, and looks like my younger brother," returned the author of "Cleopatra." "Oh, you villain! what lover's gag is that of yours? Thou canst not say I wrote it," he fiercely ejaculated, as Mr. Davenant, slightly imperfect in his part, filled the blank with a love-sentence out of another play, fresh in his memory.

"No harm done," quoth Slater provokingly, but to the point. The dialogue between Blanche and Purefoy differed little from a dozen other society love-scenes, except in one important particular—that it came off in the schoolroom, over a plate of toffee, of which the ladies Blanche and Jane had just made themselves a supply.

"Rash, that," Slater sighed with relief, when laughter and applause showed how this touch was approved by the public. "I doubted if they'd swallow your sweet-stuff."

"Last time I gave them moonlight on the river, and that didn't go down," the playwright affirmed. "Toffee is ever so much more natural, they say; I suppose they know why. I never found it myself growing wild."

"Well, it's more original," remarked the manager. "Good heavens!" as Lady Jane's dress caught on a nail, "there go half-a-dozen yards of frilling. Run, Miss Adams, quick, for a needle and be ready to put it to rights when she comes off."

I ran and lost count of the play's progress until the approach of our cooking-scene. From whispers dropped, I learnt that the act was going badly; last scene had fallen flat as a flounder, declared Mr. Slater. The situation, however depressing for the

principals, had its bright side for a trembling super. In a general breakdown her shortcomings would be overlooked.

There was applause at the realism of the labourer's kitchen, real fire and gridiron, crockery, et-cetera. Interest woke when the three sisters came in on their errand of benevolence and kindled to excitement when it transpired that Annie Torrens was going to cook a chop on the stage. I set about my pudding almost composedly, sure that nobody was taking notes of my movements; unless it were Slater at the wings.

I wouldn't make it too well, like a professional, for I was Lady Maude; but to mismanage a thing properly you must know how to manage it first. I tucked up my French cambric sleeves, tied the cottage apron over my dainty dress and set off. Three eggs, six dessert-spoonfuls of flour, milk, sugar, butter, and a pinch of salt. I beat the eggs into the flour, stirred in the milk, mixed the other ingredients carefully and well, then clapped the pudding into the saucepan—in the time appointed. I knew no more. The strange, novel experience, the sight of the house, dazed me outright. I moved in a dream. Only when the act-drop fell amid hearty applause, followed by calls for the leading actors, did my full senses return. I saw approving glances cast at me from various quarters.

"Very well indeed, my dear," said Slater. "You stepped in to the rescue very neatly. I'll be sworn nobody noticed anything was wrong."

"What *was* wrong?" I asked. No one troubled to answer, but from the talk around, I learnt that Annie, over-anxious not to appear over-skilful, had bungled the business and dropped her chop into the fire. Lady Jane, to screen the mishap, had interposed her person, leaving her potatoes unpeeled. Thus had I and my batter pudding innocently and most unconsciously usurped the place of prominence, and the unrehearsed effect proved so good as to pull the scene through.

"I thought it was all over with you," Slater confessed to the author, "but that kitchen-scene was a hit."

"I counted on it," was the reply. "An appeal to the domesticity of the public seldom fails of response. But I thought Annie Torrens dropped my play into the fire, together with that chop."

"All's well that ends well. It was the batter pudding fetched them and did it. To think we nearly cut out Lady Maude altogether! She saved the scene; the scene saved the act; a piece is saved or lost by the first act. Ergo, she saved the piece—ha, ha, ha!"

There was a general laugh, I hoped not ill-natured, at my expense.

"One moment, Mr. Slater, if you please," said a deep voice behind me which I recognized with a pang of dread.

Miss Hope! Was it possible? The rather plain termagant of an hour ago? Not the expression only—the very features seemed altered. Hold a transparency up to the light, the change is no greater. For the next hour she not only looked but was a beautiful woman of sovereign power, as she cast the nets to win back her lost lover, and taunted him with his double-heartedness till she seemed on the brink of recovering her ascendancy. Here was the “charging part” of the piece. Accident brings the rivals face to face at a country-house, where the actress consents to assist in some tableaux, in one of which she personates “Cleopatra.”

“Haven’t I seen something like that situation before?” whispered Slater dubiously.

“I borrowed it from ‘Adrienne Lecouvreur,’” returned the author candidly. “I observe that, however poorly treated, it always tells. But here the rôles are reversed. The fine lady has the sympathies of the audience.”

Already the poor little bride’s fate seems sealed, as she stumbles into the trap laid for her by her merciless rival. But Providence and a third act can do wonders—reveal every one in their true colours, unmask the adventuress, defeat her plots, and leave Blanche happy in the assurance of the disenchanted Purefoy’s unshaken allegiance.

“It’s all right now,” Slater presently remarked to the author, whose face still betrayed not a trace of elation. “Your good health, my boy; ‘Cleopatra’s’ the best play you’ve made yet.”

“Made it?” returned his companion with emphatic irony. “Your cook might as well say she’d made the hare when she’d hashed it. I’d had enough of failing with plays new and original, so I’ve tried to pass off a piece of old patchwork, and by Jove, I’ve succeeded. Good-night!”

“Don’t you stop to the end, for your call?”

“Not I; say whatever you like for me, any nonsense. I give you free leave.”

I saw him wait, though, to see the last of his heroine, Cora, when frustrated, incensed, at bay, her arts exposed, her malignancy defeated—for Purefoy, by frank confession to Blanche of errors past, has paralyzed the siren’s hands—she *dépars* vanquished. Here the force and reality thrown into the scene by Miss Hope snatched my unwary senses away. I shall ever remember the strange look of scorn, reproach, and baffled passion she cast back at her lost lover, the half-breathed utterances, so many pointed shafts aimed at her rival. Stirred, entranced, I believe I was half crying with excitement, and that as Cora clutched hold of me a tear must have dropped on her hand. I grew hot and then cold with shame to feel what a ninny she must think me, if indeed she had noticed it in the whirl. The success of “Cleopatra” was no longer doubtful; the fall of the curtain was followed by cheers

and calls for the author. Mr. Slater advanced and stated that that gentleman was not in the house, but promised to convey to him the kind approval of the audience, whilst begging to thank them in the name of Mr. Francis Gifford.

(To be continued.)

CHRISTMAS IN SOUTHERN LATITUDES.

CHRISTMAS for aye endeared to Britain's homes,
Crowning the fading year with glory;
Soon will our grey Cathedral domes
Ring with thy wondrous story.

In land-locked islands under tropic skies,
Ablaze with bloom of sun-kissed flowers,
Fair shores will hear the anthem rise
From out the deep bush bowers.

Wand'ers near coral reefs where surges break
Or rock the cradled sun in splendour,
Think, will his paler gleams awake
The robins' cadence tender?

We change our clouds for heaven's aerial height,
Red holly for the wattle golden,
Brave Yule arrives in radiant colours dight,
And dawns with love of years enfolden.

C. E. W.

HOW BROWN AWOKE AT THE RIGHT MOMENT.

THEY had all been a week in the jungle without catching a glimpse of a "fur-jacket," and but for the novelty and the high festival for which the occasion formed an excuse, they were beginning to get rather disgusted with their expedition. They thought sadly of what Smith and his party would be saying when they, the Smith party, returned triumphant to their bungalows with, perhaps, three or four tiger-skins, not to speak of other game, while here they had only accounted for a sambur deer and a few wretched antelopes.

While matters were at this stage, Brown, who loved adventure better than sleep, and seemed impervious to tropical suns, shouldered his gun one afternoon while all the rest of the camp were still steeped in after-breakfast oblivion, and hied out through the jungle for a shot at whatever chance might throw in his way. He hoped at least to come across a jungle fowl or two, or perhaps a pea fowl, to replenish their somewhat empty game-bag; and if bigger game did offer—why, he trusted to his luck and his good breech-loader to make the best of the situation.

The spreading foliage overhead with its flickering shade sheltered him from the direct blaze of the sun, which it largely absorbed; and through the cool shadow below he wound over a thick carpet of dead leaves, between clumps of interlacing creepers and trailers, long thorny canes with terrible hook-shaped prickles and dense masses of leafage; and between the huge trunks of sâl, ceesoo, toon, and other trees, which here, for hundreds of miles east and west, initialed the slopes of the mighty Himalays. Not a breath of air stirred, enough even to agitate the smoke of his cheroot as it curled straight upwards; nor did a sound break the intense stillness of the forest depths. Here it seemed as if the foot of man had never intruded to disturb Nature's primeval garb, or ever essayed the task of cutting down and transferring to the distant haunts of men these huge trunks. All seemed in its wild and natural luxuriance as from time immemorial. Every now and again rare creepers all ablaze with flowers that had wound themselves in thick leafy masses round the trunks of trees arrested Brown's attention, or parasite orchids of brilliant hues that embedded their roots in them. Brown was a keen admirer of nature, and alone as he was communing with her, he felt the quiet, deep spirit of forest life stealing over him—that strange indescribable feeling which Cooper

and Mayne Reid have so well described as wedding the great prairie hunters of the West to their woodland life. Now and again a rustle among the branches caused Brown to look up, and a brilliant jungle-fowl in all his glorious plumage flashed across the sunlight, but too quick for him to take aim. Still, by gauging their flight through the supervening foliage he managed by-and-by to drop one or two. Nothing of a larger kind offered, however, and he was bethinking himself of returning to camp, from which he must now have strolled a considerable distance, when a slight rustle among the undergrowth suddenly arrested his attention. It was nothing but an antelope that trotted out and cantered slowly away as if quite unused as yet to that novel creature, man, that had invaded its solitude. A ruthless bullet, however, soon undeceived and rolled it over, but for a moment only, for up it started again and limped away at a feeble, laboured pace. Brown gave chase, thinking it would soon drop, but still it kept its distance, till, managing to reload as he ran, a charge of No. 2 brought it down.

He had now got his antelope, but what was his consternation on looking round, to find that not only was the sun by this time very low down, but that he had lost his bearings! Another half-hour or so in the Tropics would bring total darkness, and here he was in the midst of the jungle, he knew not whither or how far from camp. He only hoped he was not too far for the reports of his friends' barrels to reach him and direct him towards them, or *vice versa*. Without such a guide the more he attempted to reach camp, the more he might be wandering away from it. Acting on this idea, he fired off shot after shot, listening intently in the intervals for the wished-for response, but not a sound replied to his signals. Things were beginning to look serious. The dusk was already deepening into darkness, the mosquitoes beginning to buzz, and fireflies to glance through the foliage. There was no chance now of his friends coming out in search of him, on a wild-goose chase at the best, and that, too, in the lawful prowling hour of the four-footed denizens of the forest. Though not one of them might be visible by day, yet Brown knew well that there might be plenty of them in every direction at night, and therefore for him to attempt a solitary journey to camp would be still more dangerous. So there seemed nothing left but to bivouac where he was for the night and make the most of the situation. Accordingly he set about his preparations without more delay.

First he looked about for a tree that would afford a safe and comfortable perch. This he soon found in one where several large arms branched off from the main trunk at an elevation of about fifteen feet from the ground, and which promised a comfortable roost at the fork or point of juncture. Before ascending, however, he was resolved not to leave behind his birds and antelope as a tasty morsel to any stray tiger or leopard that came prowling

about, so he tied one cord to the birds and another to the antelope and the other end of each to his button-hole, and thus accoutred began to ascend the tree. This he managed slowly and with some difficulty, owing to the darkness and smoothness of the trunk, and to his attention being every now and then distracted by imaginary rustling below, but with the help of his hunting-knife and sundry excrescences on the bark, at length he stood upon the branches with a triumphant feeling of being, in a manner, secure and housed for the night. He only hoped some gliding boa might not come upon him unawares and entwine him in its gentle embrace! But beyond that it would puzzle, thought he, even the feline powers of the leopard to reach him in his aerial bedchamber. He now pulled up his birds, and hitching the other cord over a branch of the tree, he soon had his antelope also landed beside him. Nothing remained now but to load and put within easy reach his double-barrelled friend, and to attach himself to the tree as a necessary precaution against sleep. Having done all this he lit his cheroot. Soon the red glow and the soothing fumes helped to dissipate the last trace of vexation at his position, and to throw him into dreamy philosophizings which seem the precursor to sleep. The forest sounds which night had awakened far and near now fell upon his ear, as if the authors were abundant all around, despite their quietude by day. He recognized the deep-throated roar of the king of the forest, the shallower half-snarl, half-howl of the leopard, and the bark of the wolf. An interlude occasionally broke in upon these in the trumpeting of an elephant or the grunt of a rhinoceros—those huge and harmless animals gradually becoming extinct through the wanton assaults of man. At times some of the roarings came very near indeed, and more than once Brown thought he could detect a cat-like movement over the leafy carpet below, but this gave him little concern. Gradually the sounds grew fainter and fainter and further off, till they ceased altogether. Brown was asleep!

How long he had slept he knew not, when a strange, undefinable impression of something wrong caused him suddenly to open his eyes and stare straight before him. There, shining through the foliage and seemingly close to him, appeared two stars of intense brilliancy and richness, the only gleams amid the pitchy darkness. He could not remove his eyes from them but kept staring as if magnetized. Presently he thought there was a slight swaying or slow movement of the stars, and hardly feeling as if he were yet awake, and with the impression of being under some strange fascination, he tried to rouse himself, never moving, however, nor yet once lifting his eyes off those glittering lights. Gradually as reflection grew clearer, the truth dawned upon him with almost overwhelming force! There was no doubt he was under the blaze of a hungry tiger's eyes, the owner of which was apparently gauging his bearings before proceeding to business. The discovery

almost petrified him for a moment, but only for a moment, and then all his coolness returned with redoubled force. Everything depended on his self-possession. His only chance of life, he felt, lay in making himself master of the situation, and this he was resolved to be. Without moving a muscle, without flinching or faltering, steadily he returned the fierce glare that was fixed upon him. In this stare was concentrated the power of the human mind over the brute. He felt this power and knew its efficacy from the experience of many previous occasions. Seconds and minutes passed and still the two continued thus motionless, staring at each other. As each minute passed, Brown felt more and more that this monster that could have torn him to pieces with ease was yet powerless to touch him so long as he kept him under the check of his eye. The least wavering on his part he knew would at once be detected by his terrible *vis-à-vis*, and signal his fate. The idea of seizing his gun had never entered his mind. Before he could half reach for it the animal would have been upon him. By-and-by, as Brown's eyes got accustomed to the darkness, he could discern, crouched on the very branch on which he lay, the outline of the tiger dimly visible only some three yards off. The time that now passed was intensified into a length that seemed interminable to Brown; but still there was no movement of the enemy. At length the glaring eyeballs, he thought, drew nearer to each other, then one gradually was lost to sight, and soon after the other. Then a stealthy cat-like movement and heaving of the strong branch as of some animal retreating along it, till presently a soft plunge and rebound of the branch indicated its having quitted its position. It was not the sound of a leap to the ground, however, but rather of springing from one branch to another, and Brown did not yet feel quite secure, though at the same time thoroughly mystified to account for the movements of his enemy. Not less puzzled was he to understand how the animal could possibly have reached him in a place that seemed inaccessible to a tiger, and where he had thought himself perfectly secure.

Presently he heard a dull thud, announcing that the brute had reached the ground, and Brown at length drew a long breath of relief. He felt that his foe was fairly gone, routed from the field; and this without a single active effort on his part! The tension of those last few minutes left a strain from which it took Brown some time to recover; then his first action, needless to say, was to get in hand his "trusty friend," to be better prepared against any fresh emergency.

Insecure though his quarters were now proved to be, he had no alternative but to continue there for the rest of the night. To descend and attempt to search for others would be the more hazardous of the two, with such neighbours about, and besides an almost impossible task in the darkness. He resolved, therefore,

to keep awake for the rest of the night and a cat's look-out for contingencies. The blood-track of the antelope had, no doubt, he thought, led to his being discovered, though possibly it was more in quest of the antelope than of himself that the tiger had scaled the tree. How he had done so, still remained a puzzle. Brown did not close an eye again that night, which seemed interminable, and took him half a dozen more Havannahs without getting him through it, but happily he had no more deadly visitants than the mosquitoes. At length a pale, purple glow through the foliage indicated approaching day, and soon thereafter Brown descended from his perch, with stiffened limbs but with a keen appetite for "chota hazri" (early breakfast), despite his night's experiences. He now found out what had so puzzled him about the tiger's ascent—namely, that the branch on which he was resting almost touched mid-way another huge semi-broken branch of a neighbouring tree that was bent down to the ground, and thus afforded easy access to the animal.

Shouldering now his antelope and birds, Brown lost no time in making tracks for camp as best he could guess. He kept firing off a shot at intervals to apprise his friends of his whereabouts, and at length a faint answering report reached his ears, sufficient to guide him on in the right direction and relieve his mind of all anxiety. Soon thereafter he was hailed by his friends amid a perfect shower of ejaculations; all the answer they got was a wail of hunger and cry for "chota hazri," after which Brown promised to relate his adventures faithfully and truly. Over a cup of steaming "mocha," hot toast, cold fowl, and eggs, Brown recounted his experiences of the night and the hair-breadth chance on which his life had hung of *waking at the right moment*. How he had done so he could only regard as providential. Two days later the skin of his tiger visitant adorned the front of the camp spread out in the sun to dry. The antelope that had attracted the brute to Brown's roost, served as a bait to lure him a second time to the tree, where he now fell a victim to the rifles of Brown and his friends who were ensconced above; and where Brown had the pleasure of passing a second night in his old quarters, though now in company with his friends, and after they had secured themselves against the dangerous access by the branch.

W. S.

A CELTIC FESTIVAL.

THE National Eisteddfod of Wales is a name well known to Saxon ears, and to many it is more than a name. Still I believe there are not a few who, like myself a little while ago, have only an indistinct notion of some mystic rites connected with Druids, bards, and harps, and bearing this strange-sounding appellation. Some years ago I happened to be staying at a little seaside place in North Wales, not far from the town where the Eisteddfod was held that year, and I found, for some days before the festival, very great difficulty in getting anything to eat, owing, as we were told, to the Eisteddfod. Hence I inferred that the Eisteddfod might be concerned with something more substantial than harp-playing, and I was reminded of a remark made to me once by an old woman in Bavaria, *à propos* of a royal visit to the town: "It's a funny thing that those grand folks always seem to send their appetites on before them." Still this did not add greatly to my knowledge of Eisteddfods or Eisteddfodau, as we should rightly call them, and I was not a little pleased this year to receive an invitation from some friends in South Wales to pay them a visit during the celebration of the Eisteddfod, which was to be held at Aberdare, a little town about four miles distant from their home. Now, I thought, I should learn the truth about those harps—so to Wales I went.

As the time of the festival drew near anxious inquiries were heard on all sides for the programme. The thought of a programme was reassuring, as it pointed to the probability of there being something besides harps. Whether the authorities were anxious to keep us in suspense as long as possible, I know not, but it was only about two days before the festival that we were able to secure a programme, and thus gain some idea of the entertainment in store for us. My first sensation on looking at it was amazement at the quantity and variety of the items. The first day's programme contained thirty divisions, and of these only one was a harp solo. There was adjudication of prizes for Welsh essays, whose titles, alas! I need not read, for a song with Welsh and English words, for pictures. There was to be a brass band competition, the thought of which alone would send a thrill of horror through any Londoner, who, like Calverley's "worn-out City clerk:"

"Thought how by his own green door,
His own green door on Campden Hill,
Two bands at least, most likely more,
Were mingling at their own sweet will
Verdi with Vance."

There was to be a glee competition too, and adjudication on the essay on "The Work and Mission of a Woman in the Family and the Sick Room." Certainly the Eisteddfod was to be comprehensive as well as national. A strange item seemed to me, awarding the prize of £10 for the best carved oak Bardic chair. But into the mystery I was soon to be initiated.

After a good deal of deliberation it was decided that the attractions of the second and third days outweighed those of the first and fourth, and as we all agreed that two whole days' "pleasure" was as much as we felt equal to, we decided to wait till the Wednesday before visiting Aberdare.

Although the Eisteddfod proper was not to begin till eleven o'clock, there were two preliminary meetings connected with it, which took place at nine o'clock, viz.—the Bardic Gorsedd, and the Cymmrodorian meeting. As the best intentions would not enable us to be in two places at once, we had to choose between the Bards with their Druidic rites, and the Cymmrodorian, i.e. Welsh Society, where questions relating to education, the Welsh language, and other matters of national interest are discussed. This met in the Temperance Hall, a building worthy its name for its total abstinence from all decoration and comfort. There we heard a paper on "University Local Examinations in Wales," read by Mrs. Bryant, a lady well known for her academic honours, and the good work she has done in the cause of higher education. The paper was interesting, and the discussion that followed animated. What most surprised me was that in an assembly which must have consisted almost entirely of educated persons it was considered necessary to have a short abstract of the paper given in Welsh for the benefit of those who could not understand English. This first impressed me with the hold the Welsh language must still have on the people—an impression that was to be deepened as the day went on.

From the Temperance Hall we adjourned to the Pavilion, where the Eisteddfod proper was to be held. This was a large tent put up for the purpose, and constructed, according to advertisement, to hold 8,000 people. Here were temporary wooden seats of so uncomfortable a description that we thought one of the items not published in the programme must have been awarding the prize for the most uncomfortable seats for visitors to the Eisteddfod. In front a large platform had been erected, and here, when we entered, the Eisteddfod band was "rendering a spirited selection of music," to quote the local papers.

When the music ceased the President of the day, who had been escorted in due honour to the Pavilion by a procession of carriages and a volunteer band, rose to give his address, the subject of which was on the "Celtic Race and Literature." As the title would indicate, the speech was learned and long—too learned and too long, I fear, for most of that large audience—since only

those in the front rows could hear, and of those that could hear not all could understand, since to many there English was a foreign tongue, and a long English speech at a Welsh festival out of place. Hence there was a good deal of that applause which signifies that the audience has had enough, and at last, I believe, some of the remarks about Druids, and quotations from Lucan's "*Pharsalia*," had to be abandoned, that the real business of the day might commence.

After the President's speech came "Bardic Addresses," and here I must explain that the Welsh bards were destroyed by Edward I., with the exception of the one who survived to pronounce the well-known curse:

"Ruin seize thee, ruthless king,
Confusion on thy banners wait!"

There still are Welsh bards, as there always have been since the beginning of time. According to ancient Celtic lore, there were originally three languages: one spoken in Heaven by God and the angels; a second, in which the Holy Scriptures were written; and a third spoken by Adam and Eve in the garden of Eden, and by all their posterity till the confusion of Babel. Then it was retained by the Cymry only, and they alone possess true divine inspiration, *Awen*, as they call it. The poetry of all other nations is an invention of the evil one. The language of the Cymry became that of the Bards and Druids. Nowadays a man becomes a bard by being called into the secret circle of the *Surddi*, i.e. ring of stones set up for the purpose. To this honour he attains by showing some knowledge of Welsh literature, and a certain amount of poetic power. He is then allowed to append to his name the initials B.B.D., which being translated would mean "a Bard according to the rites and privileges of the Bards of the Isle of Britain." He also adopts a *nom de plume*, and by this he is known throughout the country. It was amusing to see how well the people knew the bards by these names, how eagerly they called on some favourite to come forward and address them in verses, which either were or professed to be extemporized. I, who could not understand what was said, had the better opportunity of watching the effect on others, and of seeing that these poetic effusions really were appreciated, and the bards still dear to the hearts of their countrymen.

Then followed adjudications and competitions. We heard the "Harmonious Blacksmith" played three times on the harp. We heard three orchestral bands perform the same tune, and if there was a little monotony about the proceedings, we had the excitement of testing our critical powers, and seeing whether our own verdict agreed with that of the adjudicators. At last came the moment of the day, the supreme event of the *Eistoddod*—the chairing of the Bard. And now the use of the Bardic chair was made manifest. A carved oak chair was placed in a prominent position on the platform. Here the successful Bard was to take

his seat amid the congratulations of his fellows and the whole assembly. The excitement became intense. To win the Bardic Prize is the supreme ambition of a Welsh devotee of the Muses! Who was to be the happy man to-day? The subject was an Ode, "Truth against the World," the motto of the ancient Glamorgan bardic school. The adjudicators and several of the Bards came to the front of the platform; a long adjudication was read, and perhaps it only seemed long to me, since being in Welsh I did not understand a word of it, and at last the victor was proclaimed. He was called on to stand up, and then amid great excitement and shouts on the part of the audience of "I see him," "No, I don't," "There he is," "No, that isn't him," the happy poet was conducted in triumph to the platform. A trumpet was sounded in summons, another returned answer from the back of the tent, the band struck up "See the conquering hero comes," and the whole assembly rose to do honour to the victor. The poet was then seated in the chair, a mystic sword was suspended over his head, not by a single hair, but by the united grasp of all the bards; questions were put to the audience, and answered by a loud shout. I believe they were "Is it peace or war?" and the answer of course was "Peace." Then each of the bards addressed the victor in complimentary verses, and amid joyous excitement the chief part of the day's proceedings closed. By this time it was nearly five o'clock, and as we had left home at half-past seven, we thought it well to give up the evening concert, which concluded the day's festivities, and retire to rest early with a view to next day.

That Thursday was an exciting day indeed, for then was to be decided the great choral competition, the event for which all the village choirs throughout Wales practise for a whole year. To gain the prize in this competition is an honour second to none. The victorious village rejoices, as a Greek city must have done when one of her sons returned a conqueror from an Olympic contest; and though no Pindaric ode records the victory, a tribute equally heartfelt and less artificial is brought by all the happy villagers. This is, indeed, a national contest; the choirs are composed of colliers, hands from the works, and servant-girls; sometimes even the conductor is an amateur. The servants have their night a week to attend the choral practice, when they sing works of the best sacred composers. There is nothing artificial about the Welsh love of music; it is deep-rooted among the people, and is not merely brought to them as in England, laboriously by People's Concerts, which seek to impart to the labouring classes a taste they have not.

No wonder, then, that when we reached the station we found it so crowded that to take a ticket was a perilous undertaking. The weather was as unpropitious as it well could be; a perpetual down-pour of rain would have chilled the ardour of any but the members of a Welsh choir, but their good-humour was indomitable. Ar-

rived at Aberdare, we were glad to abandon the delights of the procession, and seek the doubtful shelter of the Pavilion. Here we found every one occupied in trying to take their places, so as to get their minimum amount of rain. Umbrellas were put up, mackintoshes were in request, and we were forcibly reminded of the hot steamy atmosphere of a bathing machine. But on the principle that it adds to our happiness to know that others are worse off than ourselves, we were soon consoled, and inclined to think ourselves fortunate when we heard that there were more than a thousand people outside who had paid for admission, and could not get in, for the excellent reason that there was not even standing room. As the day wore on, the crowd outside increased, and many stood there in the rain all day, unable either to hear or see, and yet in the evening, when we asked one or two how they fared, they assured us that they had enjoyed themselves very much. Does not this speak volumes for Welsh good-humour?

The business of the day was rendered difficult by the large crowd outside and in. It was impossible to maintain order when one mass of people were pressing in, and another vainly trying to make room for them. In vain all the dignitaries blessed with stentorian lungs came forward one after another to implore silence while speeches or competitions were going on; the President's address was almost inaudible, and Mr. Matthew Arnold, who was present, and had intended to speak, wisely abandoned the attempt after a few sentences. Many of the competitions, too, had to be given up, for nothing could reduce this vast crowd to order, except "the great competition" which they had come to hear, and for which they had clamoured. At last the authorities wisely decided to abandon the rest of the programme, and call on the competing choirs.

The subjects set were from Haydn, Spohr, and S. Jenkins—no easy task for village choirs—and they were thoroughly well rendered with feeling and appreciation. There were six choirs, and each had to sing the three pieces, and as much time was lost in arranging the singers, it was after half-past six o'clock before the adjudication could be given. We could not, therefore, wait till the end, though we were sorry not to be present at the exciting moment of award. After our long day in the tent we were glad to accept the hospitality of some kind friends at Aberdare, before we set out on our homeward journey. So we agreed to leave Aberdare by an early evening train, calmly disregarding the possibility of being left behind owing to the crowd. But we soon found that the return was no such easy matter. We set out for the station in a cab, but were soon told we must get out and walk. Indeed, the streets were almost impassable. The inhabitants of Aberdare thought fit to stretch their joyous occasion by turning out in full force into the streets; many, we heard, had been up all night, for it was not every year that the Eisteddfod came to Aber-

dare, and they could sleep at any time. Arrived at last at the station, we found there was no hope of getting in, so dense was the crowd. We stood outside and saw our train go off, and then another, and at last we were admitted to the platform, and told that it would be an hour before another train went. So we waited, not patiently I fear, until at last the train did come, but where to get a seat was a problem. We looked in all the carriages—they had filled instantaneously, it seemed; in despair we opened the door of the luggage van, and were greeted, to our no small surprise, with sounds of music issuing thence. At last we were fortunate enough to secure standing room in the guard's van, and returned home to the strains of the victorious choir, who sang "Home, sweet Home," and several Welsh hymns. I could not help thinking of the contrast between the Welsh and English holiday-makers, and congratulating myself that we were not in the land of the Saxon. At the station the victorious choir were met by their friends, who had turned out in force to escort them home in triumph, playing "See the conquering hero comes." And we for our part turned homewards, weary with the fatigues of the day, and yet feeling amply repaid by the insight we had gained into Welsh national life.

The Eisteddfod of 1887 is to be held in London, we are told, at the Crystal Palace. There many English people will have an opportunity of witnessing this festival, but I fear it will be neither Welsh nor national there. The charm of the local excitement will be wanting, crowds of merely curious spectators will go, and the bards will speak to an audience which knows them not. Still we trust the Eisteddfod may survive even this trial; and since it is, we are assured, as old as Eden, those who like myself feel that it is doing real work in preserving a nationality that might be in danger of extinction, can but hope that as it dates from the beginning, so it may endure to the end of the world.

OVER THE GARDEN WALL.

THE house next-door was taken at last. Such was almost the first piece of news with which I was greeted on returning home from Oxford for the long vacation, and I received it with sincere rejoicing. The house next-door had long been our family bugbear. It was the property of a parsimonious old gentleman who would not go to the expense of putting it in proper repair; and it had consequently remained unlet for over two years, growing gradually more and more an eyesore. The stucco was falling away from the front; several of the window-panes were broken, and the garden in the rear had become a perfect wilderness, a wild expanse of vegetation gone wrong. This was the more annoying because Dynevor Terrace, as a rule, prided itself upon its back-gardens. Each house had a lawn behind it, on which tennis could be played. I assert without hesitation that it could be played, for I have done it myself, but we didn't do it often; for the necessity of sending round to the houses on either side every other minute or so, for lost balls, interfered a good deal with the progress of the game, besides being rather trying to the tempers of the neighbouring domestics. Behind each lawn there was a grassy bank topped with evergreens; and behind this again was a piece of ground devoted to the purpose of a kitchen-garden. New tenants, as a rule, began with a flourish, even attempting such lofty achievements as sea-kale and asparagus, but their enthusiasm fell off after a little while, and the greengrocer was instructed to call as usual. We ourselves were not so ambitious. Our highest flights consisted of some consumptive-looking rhubarb, a few long-legged cabbages, and some radishes. If radishes were grown for the sake of their foliage, ours would have been a magnificent success, but they unfortunately combined a maximum of leaf with a minimum of root, and, as an article of food, were a failure. We also made an attempt at vegetable marrows, which were likewise very successful so far as foliage was concerned, but ultimately turned out to be pumpkins. Each garden had a small plantation of gooseberry-bushes on either side; but the crop consisted chiefly of small green caterpillars, hanging suspended by short threads, and apparently making believe to be gooseberries, but I cannot say that they were a satisfactory substitute. The kitchen-garden of the house next-door seemed, by dint of neglect, to have got mixed up with the professedly ornamental portion. One

or two rhubarb plants were growing, with a healthy vigour which *ours* never displayed, in the very middle of the lawn, while the kitchen-garden appeared to have started a grass-plot of its own, immediately under the gooseberry bushes.

Now, however, all was changed. The parsimonious proprietor of No. 99 had gone to that bourne whither no landlord can take either his money or his house property, and the new owner had re-decorated the house, re-organized the garden, and secured a tenant, who had already taken possession. The available information went to the extent that he was a Mr. Browne, a widower, with an only daughter, who was chaperoned by a maiden aunt, Miss Bunbury, a sister of Mr. Browne's deceased wife. In London it is by no means a matter of course to be on terms of acquaintance with one's next-door neighbour. He may be the personification of respectability, and the incarnation of every Christian virtue, but on the other hand he may not, and most Londoners think it wise to act on the latter supposition. My relatives had followed the usual practice, and we knew no more of our next-door neighbours than we ascertained involuntarily from the casual gossip of the servants, or from seeing them walking, or otherwise employed, in their garden. The wall between was over six feet high, and therefore persons walking in adjoining gardens saw nothing of each other; but from my window on the second-floor back, where I was popularly supposed to read Greek for several hours a day, I had ample opportunities for studying the out-door doings of our neighbours. Mr. Browne began his gardening operations before breakfast. He used to come out of doors in a loose holland jacket and slippers, and an old straw hat. Thus accoutred, he would plant himself, with his legs well apart, and the straw hat on the back of his head, and sternly consider some unoffending geranium. After a few minutes' cogitation he would come to the conclusion that the position of said geranium was not quite what it ought to be, and would deliberately dig it up, and plant it again some six or eight inches farther on. He would then again stand with his legs apart and the trowel behind him, and study the effect of the new arrangement. Sometimes he appeared to be pleased with the result, but more often the effect did not quite satisfy his artistic eye, and the unhappy geranium was howked-up again, and planted a few inches farther on. By this time he was generally called in to breakfast, after which the garden knew him no more until the same time the following morning, when he would review his work, and occasionally shift the unfortunate plant on another stage or so. One unhappy pelargonium travelled in this way the whole length of a flower-bed, and if it had not then died, it might be travelling still. Miss Bunbury went about with an old pair of dogskin gloves many sizes too large for her, and a pair of small shears, and clipped off dead leaves, and twigs of too exuberant growth. My private nickname for her (I was nothing if not classical in those

days) was Atropos, after the lady who carried the fatal scissors and snipped the thread of life. She was a pleasant-looking old-maidish little body with a rather red nose, and I should *think* (one doesn't like to be too positive in such a delicate matter) would never see forty-five again. If she wasn't very young, however, she evidently did not consider herself very old, for her manner, as she skipped along the garden-walk, and every now and again flew off like an elderly butterfly, and swooped upon some too redundant spray, was juvenility itself. The manner of Clarissa (exquisite name!) had a dignity which would have been worthy of the divine Herè herself. From the very first moment when I saw Clarissa Browne walk round that garden with her arm round her aunt's waist, and singing,

"What will you do, love, when I am going,
With white sails flowing,
The seas beyond?"

I was her willing captive. The flood of devotion I poured down on her unconscious head from that second-floor window is beyond all telling. I mentally compared our case to that of "Romeo and Juliet." Of course there were differences. There was no ancient feud between our respective families (thank goodness for that!). Romeo, in my case, was upstairs, and the lady of my love was in the garden below, but that was a trifling detail. I was more troubled by the reflection that no Romeo that I had ever heard of wore spectacles. I made a gallant effort to dispense with mine, but I found that under such circumstances I couldn't see my beloved at all; and as, in any case, I knew that she couldn't see me, I decided to put them on again; reflecting that Shakespeare nowhere says that Romeo *didn't* wear spectacles, so that it is conceivable, after all, that he may have done so. Love is notoriously short-sighted. Mr. Irving unquestionably wears a double eyeglass in private life, so, if you come to that, why not spectacles as Romeo?

It may naturally be expected that I should give some description of the object of my affections, but I really feel scarcely equal to the task. In the first place, as the reader will already have inferred from my mention of spectacles, I am rather short-sighted, and I have to take a good deal for granted. I get a general outline, so to speak, and fancy does the rest. At the period of which I speak I had only had a sort of bird's-eye view of my beloved one from my second-floor window. Distance proverbially lends enchantment to the view, and it certainly did so in my case. The general effect was exquisite. Condescending to particulars, as the Scottish lawyers say, I don't think I could absolutely swear to much more than a transcendently consummate parting at the top of the head, a wealth of delicious back-hair let down *à la baigneuse*, and a plump yet graceful figure. I have always had a

weakness for the plump yet graceful. "Fairy-like" is all very well as a figure of speech, but I am rather of Tennyson's opinion :

"As to fairies, that do flit
Across the greensward fresh,
I hold them exquisitely knit,
But far too spare of flesh."

My Clarissa was not open to any reproach on that score. I could see that much even from my second-floor window. Happily, I was destined soon to be favoured with a closer acquaintance. One memorable night, towards the close of my vacation, between nine and ten o'clock, one of the servants from No. 99 came to our front-door in a state of breathless excitement, and said, "Oh, please, Missises compliments, and would one of the gentlemen be kind enough to come in at once, as there's a burglarer in Miss Bunbury's bedroom?" My father was out (I don't believe he would have gone if he had been at home), and on me, therefore, devolved the duty of representing the household, and of rushing to the relief of beauty in distress. I seized my boomerang, and followed the frightened damsel into No. 99. I should here explain that I have no especial predilection for the boomerang, but it happened to be the only weapon of any kind in the house, and therefore I took it, though more for the look of the thing than from any deeply-rooted confidence in its virtues as a warlike implement. It had been presented to me by a certain Uncle Dick, who had gone over to New Zealand to make his fortune. His sole worldly possessions when he returned consisted of the clothes he stood up in, a recipe for making kangaroo's tail soup, and the boomerang, which, as I have already mentioned, he presented to me. He used to explain, particularly after two or three glasses of whisky and water, how this deadly weapon, hurled by hands of the skilful savage, would not only bring down his foe with unerring certainty, but, having done its work, would fly back and replace itself, with a graceful somersault, at its master's feet. I shall never forget the blood-curdling impressiveness of his manner, as he replied, in answer to a question on my part, "Killed anybody, sir? To my certain knowledge that boomerang has killed thirteen men, besides women and children!" He never would bind himself to the exact number of the women and children, but he wouldn't bate a fraction of the thirteen males. I tried it one afternoon in the Regent's Park, I myself representing the noble savage. At my first attempt I flung it into a tree, and had to pay a boy sixpence to fetch it down again. Upon a second trial the wretched implement nearly killed a small child, a good fifty yards from the spot at which I aimed, and then cannoned on to a park-keeper. It cost me half a crown to pacify the nurse, and as much more to square the park-keeper, while the original sufferer refused to be comforted under two-pennyworth of almond-

rock and a ginger-bread monkey. After this experience I came to the conclusion that the boomerang, like other arms of precision, requires practice, and I determined to practise accordingly; but I had found no opportunity of doing so before I was thus called upon to use it in grim earnest. As may be supposed, under the circumstances, I had not implicit reliance on my weapon, but it was better than nothing, and I had a dim idea that if by some means I could call attention before the combat to the number of victims it had already slain, the burglar might possibly surrender without a struggle.

I was met in the hall by Miss Bunbury and her niece, the former in a state of high excitement; the latter much calmer, and displaying a noble fortitude which, if possible, increased the intensity of my admiration for her. For the first time I was enabled to see her face to face, and was delighted to find that the promise of my bird's-eye view was more than fulfilled by a closer inspection. I was very nearly forgetting all about the burglar, but was recalled to a sense of my position by Miss Bunbury, who exclaimed, clasping her hands with emotion:

"How good of you to come! How brave! How noble! How can we ever thank you, Mr.—?"

She paused, and I was obliged to supply the blank. "Higginbottom," I said with an effort. I had long felt that Higginbottom was a mean and ugly patronymic (indeed, I had already made a fruitless attempt to get my father to change it to Higginbotham). But how mean, how ugly, I had never realized until it was thus drawn out of me under the calm gaze of my beloved. "Theophilus Higginbottom," I added, with a strong emphasis on the Theophilus. My adored one smiled (I hoped it was at the Theophilus and not at the Higginbottom). "It is really very kind of you, Mr. Higginbottom," she said, "though I trust the matter is not so serious as my aunt imagines."

"Serious, my dear! If a burglar in one's own wardrobe isn't serious, I should like to know what is."

"Yes, auntie; but then, you know, last time, when you would have it there was a man in the bath-room, you thought that was serious too."

"I was wrong in that case, my dear, I admit, but any one might have been deceived then; but there is no mistake this time, for I heard his breathing as distinctly as possible. But now Mr. Higgin-what-is-it has come I don't feel nearly so nervous. What a thing it is to be a MAN!"

How circumstances alter cases. If I could have got my divine Clarissa to have looked at me with that self-same expression I should have been raised to the seventh heaven of delight. As it was, I took it with the most philosophic indifference.

"What is that you are carrying?" inquired my divinity; "a scimitar?"

"N—no," I replied, "not exactly a scimitar. But it is a very deadly weapon. This is a Boomerang. It has killed"—here I raised my voice, and spoke with great distinctness, in hopes that the burglar would hear me and take to flight—"thirteen men, besides women and children."

Miss Bunbury's eyes sparkled, but I fancied my Clarissa looked at me with a glance of aversion, and I hastened to explain (in a much lower tone), "I didn't do it myself, you know. Aborigines—natives, in fact."

"Oh!" said Miss Bunbury. "Ah!" said Clarissa. There was a marked difference of expression between the two exclamations. It seems to me that Clarissa's was expressive of the relief of a tender heart, Miss Bunbury's of a blood-thirsty disappointment.

"Hadh't we better go upstairs?" said Clarissa, after a pause. "If Mr. Higginbottom is going to capture your burglar, auntie, we may as well get it over."

It struck me that this was a trifle heartless, but no doubt the dear girl didn't realize the terrible risk I ran.

"By all means; only let me get at him," I said, with a ferocity which I was far from feeling.

Accordingly we ascended the stairs in single file, I leading the way, with the boomerang poised on my shoulder. There was gas lighted on every landing.

"Which room?" I asked in a whisper.

"The second-floor front," was the reply, delivered in a similar tone.

"You won't kill him while we are in the room, will you?" said Miss Bunbury.

I felt that I might safely promise *that*. I only hoped that *he* wouldn't kill *me*.

"No," I said loudly, for the burglar's benefit. "I will promise not to kill him while you are in the room; indeed, if he will surrender at once, without any trouble, I am willing to spare his life."

By this time we had got inside the room. I prepared, with proper precaution, to look under the bed; but Miss Bunbury interposed:

"He isn't there," she said, "he's in the wardrobe, locked in." And truly I fancied I could hear, proceeding from the article in question, a subdued breathing. A happy thought struck me:

"If he is locked in, hadn't we better send for the police before we let him out?" But I saw the calm eye of Clarissa resting upon me, and its expression goaded me into rashness. Discretion is the better part of valour. Shakespeare says so, and I quite agree with him, but you can't get women to see it in that light. Clarissa's good opinion must be maintained at all hazards. "No," I said, with a perish-the-thought kind of expression, as if somebody else had made the policeman suggestion; "we'll have him

out first, and see what he is made of. Stand back, ladies ;" and thereupon I suddenly turned the key of the wardrobe, and brandishing the boomerang round my head, sprang back to the centre of the room, to await the expected onslaught. Strange to say, there wasn't any; the door remained closed. Emboldened by this hesitation on the part of my enemy, I knocked boldly with the boomerang on the panel, saying in my sternest accents: "In the name of the law, come out."

There was no reply in words, but from behind the closed door came a pitiful "miaouw." I boldly flung the door open, and there, at the bottom of the hanging press, was a handsome tortoiseshell cat, with a newly-born family, calmly reposing in an open bonnet-box, on a heap of feminine fal-de-rals.

Miss Bunbury gave a little scream.

"You wicked, wicked cat, to frighten us all so dreadfully! And, oh, what have you done? My poor, poor bonnet, new only last Saturday!"

It was too true. Pussy, who had doubtless lived in good families, had determined that the arrangements for her *accouchement* should be in the very latest style, and regardless of expense. The interesting event had taken place in Miss Bunbury's best bonnet.

Among the advantages of belonging to the male sex, I should certainly include, as a most valuable branch of the prerogative, that of being able to swear on sufficient occasion. I would not have the expedient lightly used; I hold that no man should swear *nisi dignus vindice nodus*, in our classical phrase; but there *are* times when nothing short of the "big, big d—" is adequate to the occasion, or will act as an efficient lightning-conductor to the overcharged heart. Miss Bunbury had not this resource; she spluttered out a few feminine expletives, as inadequate to the occasion as a milk-jug to extinguish a conflagration, and burst into tears. I caught Clarissa's eye, and half thought that I surprised a smile, but if so it was instantly repressed; she addressed herself with the utmost gravity to console her sorrowing aunt, who after a little while began to cheer up a little, and to appreciate the humorous side of the matter.

"It is provoking, though, now isn't it?" she said, laughing through her tears. "A new bonnet that was to have lasted me all the summer. You naughty, *naughty* cat!"

Puss gave a deprecating purr, as though the matter were really hardly worth making such a fuss about, and set to work again to wash her babies.

"And to think that we should have sent for Mr. Wiggin—Higginbottom on a false alarm."

"We! You, auntie," said Clarissa. "You really must not bring me into the question. I should not have sent for anybody."

"My dear," said her aunt, "that's all very well for you to say

now. I should not have sent for Mr. Higgin—Wigginbottom myself merely to show him that the cat had—behaved in such a remarkable manner; but consider, my dear, if it *had* been burglars!”

“You’ve cried ‘Wolf’ too often, auntie,” said Clarissa, “for me to be much afraid. In our last house, Mr. Higginbottom, auntie, would have it that there was a burglar in the bath-room, but it proved to be only a tap which somebody had left dripping.”

“But we are not the less obliged, I am sure, dear, to Mr. Wigginbottom for his prompt and courageous assistance. I do *admire* a brave man. I wish—” (this with a gush of emotion)—“I wish it *had* been a burglar, for Mr. Wigginbottom’s sake.”

“Thank you,” I said, “it’s just as well as it is; don’t you think so, Miss Browne?”

“I do indeed,” she said. “I am not particularly fond of cats, but I prefer them to burglars; in any case, we are deeply indebted to you, Mr. Higginbottom; it will be pleasant, in case of alarm, to know that we have so courageous a neighbour.”

Her praise had such an intoxicating effect on me, that I was very nearly expressing a wish that they might be alarmed in the same manner every night; but reflecting that this was a little too much to expect of the cat, and withal would hardly sound as romantic as I intended, I refrained, and shortly afterwards took my leave.

In due course I retired to my couch, but not to sleep. Over and over again I pictured to myself the scene, the excitement of Miss Bunbury, the calm fortitude of my Clarissa, and my own part in the matter, which I flattered myself I had sustained with a considerable amount of dignity. The *dénoûment* was a little bit of an anti-climax, it was true, but that was no fault of mine. I went to No. 99 prepared to do battle with a genuine burglar. He might have been a burglar of the most ferocious description, a burglar of colossal stature, and provided with a whole armoury of lethal weapons, and I had faced him—or at least I was prepared to face him—with no protection save a simple boomerang; which, by the way, I didn’t know how to use. It really seemed to me, upon reflection, that I had been extremely imprudent; if there *had* been a burglar at No. 99 he might have done me a serious injury. Fortunately things had taken a more favourable turn, and the only question was how best to use my gallant conduct (I felt that this was really a legitimate way of describing it) to my advantage with Clarissa. At this point I (at last) fell asleep, and dreamed a series of remarkable dreams, in which bonnets, burglars, boomerangs, and tortoiseshell cats were mixed up in wild confusion. At one stage of the proceedings, I remember Clarissa was about to marry a burglar, and I was obliged to give the bride away, when Miss Bunbury, armed with the boomerang, forbade the banns, and claimed the burglar as her long-lost brother. I

think the horror I then went through completed my subjugation. I awoke with a firm resolution that, come what would, I would declare myself, and know my fate. I would not let concealment, "like a worm i' the bud," prey on *my* damask cheek. (I don't know, upon calmer reflection, that there was much "damask" about the matter, but I think there cannot be much doubt about the "cheek.")

Having arrived at this conclusion, the next question was—how? After due consideration I decided to write to my adored one, in the first instance, a letter, entreating to be allowed a private interview. I felt convinced that if I were only allowed to plead my cause face to face, my impassioned fervour would speedily bear down all opposition. If not—but *that* alternative was really hardly worth considering.

No time was to be lost, for I was going back to Oxford three days later. Accordingly, no sooner had I finished breakfast, and settled myself comfortably in my sanctum, ostensibly for the deglutition of sundry tough passages of the *Œdipus Coloneus*, than I addressed myself to composition, and indited a letter as follows:

"ADORED CLARISSA,

"The incident of last night (though it terminated in an unexpected manner) will have given you some faint idea of what I am ready to do and dare in order to win a smile from you. Give me, I entreat you, an opportunity of pleading my suit in person. A simple hearing is all I ask; my heart tells me that I shall not plead in vain.

"Your devoted

"THEOPHILUS.

"P.S. Place your reply on the top of the wall in the arbour."

I should explain that there was in the garden of No 99 a weeping ash, whose branches overhung the wall into our own garden. On the No. 99 side of the wall they were trained over a wooden framework, forming a rustic arbour, in which Clarissa and her aunt were wont to sit at work, and occasionally to take tea. A blissful thought presented itself to me that perhaps ere long I myself might be invited to partake of tea in that arbour; and I would have cheerfully run even the risk of caterpillars down my back and earwigs in my teacup (which I know by experience to be the normal conditions of taking tea in an arbour) for such a consummation. Having indited my letter, the next thing was to get it to its destination, and it struck me that the arbour would be at once a convenient and romantic medium of communication. No doubt I might have sent my missive by post, but that would have been a terribly commonplace way of doing things. Happily, the very same evening I saw, from my watch-tower, Clarissa and her aunt, after strolling for a little while in the garden, take their seats

in the arbour, each occupied with some form of fancy-work. Fortune favoured me, for just as it began to grow dusk, the servant came into the garden and spoke to Miss Bunbury, who immediately followed her into the house, leaving my beloved still seated in the arbour. This was my opportunity. I flew downstairs, passed rapidly into the garden, and walking on the grass-plot so that my footsteps should not be heard, made my way under the ash-tree, and gently dropped my letter over the wall. I heard an exclamation on the other side, but I did not wish to precipitate matters, and I therefore at once retired as silently as I could.

Again I had a most uncomfortable night, my mind being distracted by a host of harassing speculations. Had I made my epistle too warm, or not warm enough, and how would my *Clarissa* take it? Had I exercised a wise discretion in the mode of its delivery? for a terrible fear had struck me (suggested by the somewhat alarmed tone of her exclamation), that I had dropped it precisely on her head. What would her answer be, or would she vouchsafe an answer at all? Happily these curious speculations were speedily set at rest, for the very next morning, on looking out of my window, I saw the glint of a little white object lying on the wall beneath the ash-tree. It must be—yes, it was—the answer to my letter. So prompt a reply could be but of happy augury. I speedily secured it, and read as follows:

“I fear it is scarcely maidenly to reply to your communication, and yet I feel that after your gallant conduct of the other night, it would be ungrateful not to hear what you desire to say to me. If you are not afraid to venture over the wall this evening at a quarter to ten, in the kitchen-garden, close to the cucumber-frame, you will find

“*CLARISSA.*”

Venture over a garden-wall! I would have ventured into a den of lions, or into the jaws of a battery, to meet *Clarissa*. Or at any rate I fully believed that I would. Possibly I had a latent consciousness that she was too sensible to make an appointment in such an inconvenient locality, and this no doubt sustained my resolution.

I really hardly know how I got through that day. *Oedipus Coloneus* was simply nowhere. I went out in the afternoon and purchased a pair of delicate lavender gloves, and a necktie that might have softened the heart of a gorgon, and towards evening I put on all my Sunday garments, with a new pair of light trousers that were a perfect poem; and thus arrayed, I waited eagerly for the hour of my tryst. I had some difficulty in satisfactorily accounting for the unusual gorgeousness of my apparel, and the questions of my young brother in particular brought me

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to the very verge of lunacy. I am very fond of him in a general way, but if I could have murdered him (without being found out) that evening I really think I should have done it. I dissembled, however, and at the appointed hour, punctual to the moment, I stole out into the garden. I put on my lavender kids under the ash-tree, and then advancing into the kitchen-garden, proceeded to select a convenient spot to climb the wall. I examined several, but they all appeared to be equally inconvenient. I had no idea that climbing a mere garden-wall was such a difficult matter. I have not had much gymnastic experience, and I had a vague notion that as long as you could get your hands on the top of the obstacle, the rest of your body would follow somehow or other. I found, however, that the force of gravitation was considerably greater than I had supposed, and I began to deliberate whether I should have time to go back into the house and fetch a kitchen-chair, when I heard a faint cough on the other side of the wall. My charmer was there, at a few feet distance, just on the other side of that ridiculous obstacle. "Perish kitchen-chairs!" I inwardly ejaculated, and with a fixed resolve to do or die this time, I dashed at the wall, and succeeded in getting my elbows (sadly excoriated, by the way) on the top of it. My lavender gloves were a wreck, but that was a minor consideration. All would have been well, but that, as ill-luck would have it, our house-dog, Gruff, chanced at this moment to be let out for his evening walk in the garden, and seeing a pair of legs dangling in an unaccustomed position from the wall, "went for" them with great vivacity. If he would have waited long enough for me to speak to him, doubtless he would have ceased his attack, but there was no time to parley, and Gruff was by no means the kind of dog of whom it is said that his bark is worse than his bite. I made a frantic spring upwards just as his teeth met in the poetic trousers. The cloth, perhaps fortunately, gave way, and Gruff secured a handsome sample. He tried for another, but fear lent me agility, and rolled over the wall and fell on the other side. I landed on one of the largest gooseberry-bushes, which broke my fall, after a fashion; but oh! those awful prickles. I have never been able to relish gooseberry-tart since. For the moment I was all but stunned, and hardly knew where I was, but I struggled somehow or other off the gooseberry-bush, and sat up *sur mon séant*, as the French say. A female voice tenderly whispered: "Theophilus, dear Theophilus, say you are not hurt." I would have said a great deal to please my Clarissa, but my habitual regard for truth wouldn't let me go so far as *that*. "N—not very much," I stammered, gallantly ignoring sundry severe bruises, and about five-and-twenty gooseberry prickles which were still sticking in various parts of my person. I struggled to my feet. Clarissa stood before me, wisely arrayed in a long waterproof cloak, and her head enveloped in a Shetland shawl, which left but a small

portion of her features visible. "Beloved Clarissa," I said, clasping her hand; but just then the moon came from behind a cloud, and shed a silver beam upon my charmer's nose. It was the wrong nose! Clarissa's was a delicate aquiline, and white as the driven snow. The nose before me was an unmistakable *retroussé*, and of a roseate tint. "Clarissa?" I said again, but this time interrogatively. "And what have you to say to Clarissa?" was the arch reply, the Shetland shawl being at the same time thrown a little back. "Miss Bunbury!" I exclaimed, aghast. "Nay, dearest, why this sudden coldness?" she replied. The situation was one which did not admit of explanation. There was nothing for it but flight, and I fled accordingly. Fortunately there was a plum-tree trained against the wall on that side, and clutching wildly at its branches, I raised myself by their means to the top of the wall, and thence rolled on to the gooseberry-bushes on our own side. Gruff was waiting for me, and bit me in two or three places, but I was fortunately able to make myself known to him before he had time to do me any permanent injury. What became of Miss Bunbury I cannot say, but I heard her call me a perfidious man, as I vanished over the wall, and I rather infer, from certain sounds of breaking glass, that she incautiously sat down on the cucumber-frame.

The reader will have anticipated how my mistake arose. Miss Bunbury and Miss Browne were both Clarissas, the latter having been named after her aunt; and my unfortunate shortsightedness had caused me to deliver my *billet-doux* to the wrong lady. I returned to Oxford the very next day, effectually cured of my passion so far as the Clarissas were concerned. A casual letter from home informed me soon after, as a piece of local news, that Miss Browne was engaged to a young naval officer, Lieutenant Hardwicke. Hence, doubtless, her frequent musical allusions to the "white sail flowing, the seas beyond." When I again returned home, and chanced to meet our neighbours, we bowed in the most distant manner. Meanwhile, I venture to commend to our legislators, who are frittering away their energies over deceased wives' sisters, and criminal law amendment, and other matters of quite secondary importance, the desirability of bringing in a short bill, making it penal for aunts and nieces to have the same Christian names.

ANGELO J. LEWIS.

OUT OF THE WORLD.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "THE DIARY OF A PLAIN GIRL."

The Falcon Inn,
St. Mawgan-in-Pydar,
Vale of Lanherne, Cornwall.
October.

DEAREST PSYCHE,

Your most meagre little note, announcing your arrival in town, was forwarded to me here. Alas, my friend! we seem fated never to meet, like the pathetic little man and woman in the weather-prophet toy of one's youth; I used to feel so sorry for the poor woman as she emerged from her gay house, prophesying sunshine, only to find that her mate, in obedience to some cruel and inscrutable law of his being, had withdrawn at her approach! Shall I read you a sermon on that toy? It would not be difficult, but you shall be spared for this once.

To speak quite plainly, while you were disporting yourself in the country, I was languishing in town, and now the situation is reversed. Yes, I have lost every claim to consideration as a person of fashion, and must confess to having stayed in London all through August and September. I will not trouble you with any account of the various complications which led to my abandonment of the usual "flitting;" suffice, that they arose in about an equal degree from "the eternal lack of pence," and the engagement and marriage of my sister Josephine. I had determined to follow the example of several millions of my fellow-townsfolk, and do without a holiday altogether; but when the excitement of wedding preparations was over, and the culminating catastrophe of wedding functions had "supervened;" when the boys had gone back to school, and a company of sparrows discussing the rice on the pavement outside was the only reminder of what had occurred, a great blankness fell upon my soul.

I found that, like Lady Clara Vere de Vere, I was sickening of a vague disease, but, not being possessed of "boundless wealth," my case was even more pitiable than that of the sweet-eyed enchantress.

Genuine Cockney as I am, I began to

"Loathe the squares and streets
And the faces that one meets"

with an unutterable loathing. "Anywhere, anywhere out of the world," I cried; and then it was that some one suggested this place as likely to meet the wants of a seedy and penurious spinster desirous of rest and change. So one day, now about two weeks ago, I found myself speeding westward across the October country, and on the afternoon of the morrow (for I had passed the night with kind friends at Plymouth) I alighted at a little wayside station, where a waggonette from the Falcon Inn awaited me. A long drive across a beautiful autumnal country, a cautious descent into a green and placid valley, and the carriage drew up before a little oblong stone house, with an unobtrusive sign-board above the door. A kind hostess came out to meet me and led me into a charming room, with books, and flowers, and pictures, and a log fire blazing merrily in the grate. Presently a dimpled maid appeared bearing on her tray a dainty meal wherein home-made bread and clotted cream figured largely, and where a fragrant teapot crowned the whole. I began to feel that my rash and sudden flight from town was turning out more satisfactorily than many a planned and premeditated holiday. The two weeks that I have been here have only served to confirm and deepen the first pleasant impression; but the happiest holiday, like the happiest nation, is apt to have no history, and I am taking mine ease at mine inn at the expense of my correspondents!

You are one of the rare people who like "descriptions," which makes the lack of adventure less of a stumbling-block in writing to you, although, on the other hand, I was never a good hand at describing. Well, dear, as to the landscape, it is very big, and very green, and very uninhabited-looking. Down in my valley, my Vale of Lanherne (a nice romantic name, is it not? Sounds as though there ought to be a maid of Lanherne!) there are elm-trees, and little rushing brooks with moss-grown, fern-tufted banks and bridges; but beyond there is nothing but wave upon wave of downs, intersected by deep lanes, and terminating in one direction in tall slatey cliffs overhanging the Atlantic Ocean. As for the cottages, they are few and far between, and quite uninteresting—small, square blocks of stone and cement, slate-roofed, drab-tinted. Their distinguishing feature is that you never find two on the same level; each little house is stuck about at random on a little shelf of its own. The people are pleasant and good-looking, especially the men and the children; if our friend Gambogia were here, she would have half the village "sitting" to her in no time. I think I see you smile ironically as you read. "And this Cockney is deceiving herself, and thinks to deceive me!" you are saying; "this person, who has a confessed preference for chimney-tops to tree-tops, is pretending to enjoy herself in a rustic solitude in the heart of October." No, dear, frankly, I am *not* playing at Wordsworth, not trying to "get at one with

nature," as one used to in the old days, before one had come to recognize one's limits; and I *do* enjoy my diurnal *Pall Mall*, and am not in the least indifferent to my weekly *Academy*. But I am genuinely interested in the hitherto unknown aspect of life which a village community such as ours presents.

I have given up all attempts at work, though I occasionally *improve my French!* Do you remember our paper-backed library in the Black Forest last year? My kind hostess has instructed me in bread-making and cream-scalding, and is quite capable of giving instructions in a great many other things. We mix Matthew Arnold with our pastry, and wage war on questions of "the infinite" as we chop meat for pies; all this morning we were up to the eyes in argument, and up to the elbows in flour! It is quite refreshing to find people honestly interested in thinking out things for themselves, after the *tout-est-dit* attitude of the intellectual Londoner. It recalls the dear old days at Princess Ida's. Ah! those fierce old fights round the fire! . . . Malthusia has five children now, and never talks political economy; Agnostica has gone over to Rome; Democratica has married a capitalist and cuts all her old friends. . . "But, tush! I am puling," as Mr. Rutland Barrington says in the "Sorcerer."

This afternoon I went up to the convent of Lanherne, which, screened by many trees, directly faces the "Falcon." In this fine old building, with its delicate stone-work, delicately tinted by the hand of Time, are immured twenty ladies, nuns of the Carmelite order. The woman who showed me the chapel and burial ground (I was not allowed to penetrate into the building itself) spoke with enthusiasm of convent existence. It was a beautiful life, she said—for those who had the vocation! Did she propose taking the veil?

Alas! she had not the "vocation"!

Near the convent, and originally belonging to it, is the beautiful church with its tower of mellow stone and its grass-grown graveyard. Our idiot boy (of course we have an idiot boy, though his name is not "Foy") was craning his long thin neck over the churchyard wall as I came through the lych-gate, an hour ago; the sun was setting behind the tall elms; the children were playing by the gold-tinted brook; a company of geese was promenading the road, engaged in animated conversation; a little farther on I could see that anomalous being, the village policeman (he is a most spurious-looking object), wisely passive as usual, and the rector's wife was speeding up the hill with a basket on her arm: nothing could have been more peaceful or rustic, but do you know what happened to me? I thought I heard a distant newsboy calling out Special Editions and terrible catastrophes! My case strikes me as more pathetic than that of poor Susan who imagined a river flowing through Cheapside!

I have had one really important experience—I have seen the Sea. Oh yes, I know that one used to go annually to the “seaside” in one’s youth and ply one’s wooden spade near the bathing machines; that one has fretted and strutted on a good many “Esplanades,” and lain prostrate in many a “Ladies’ Cabin,” in later years; but that was quite another thing. Two miles’ walk over the downs brought me to a long sandy tract, interspersed with brackish pools and rank grass. Over the sand I sped, in the face of a great sou’-wester, breathless, eager, towards the long creamy breakers.

A great solitary sea was churning and booming away at the base of the dark cliffs; nothing but sky, and ocean, but cliff and crag to be seen. No pier, no breakwater, no houses, save a lonely coast-guard’s hut in the distance. The sight took away one’s breath more effectually than the sou’-wester itself. I understood, for the first time, what poets mean when they write about the sea. This was no bathing pond for Cockneys, but the “great sweet mother, mother and lover of men, the sea,” whose “sweet hard kisses are strong like wine,” whose “large embraces are keen like pain.” I had quite a little rapture, all by myself, for which, alas! I paid with a bad headache next day.

“Is this the mighty ocean—is this all?” I wonder if Landor knew the north-west coast of Cornwall?

Excuse these musings of a solitary, and write soon; or you might pay me a visit. You could ride and drive to your heart’s content. Personally, I am satisfied to jog about the lanes in a disreputable-looking donkey-cart. The donkey is sturdy if obstinate, and can be brisk on occasion; and the hedgerows, crowning the deep lanes, are in all their autumn glory of russet leaves, red berries, gleaming blackberries, and purple sloes. In the midst of this October wealth it is strange to see such survivals of summer as flowering honey-suckle; and the cottage gardens are aglow with fuchsias and hydrangeas.

In any case I shall see you soon. Much as I admire the superior peace, simplicity, and beauty of a country life, I know that my own place is among the struggling crowd of dwellers in cities. I am like Browning’s “icy fish” in “Caliban”—do you remember?—who

“Longed to ‘scape the rock stream where she lived
And thaw herself within the lukewarm brine. . . .
Only she ever sickened, found repulse
At the other kind of water. . . .”

With which effusion I conclude.

Write! I have a morbid craving for the postman. He only comes once a day!

Yours ever,
MELISSA.

JERSEY.

IN the good old days, sixty years ago, the ordinary communication between Jersey and England was made by sailing boats. Her Majesty's ships brought the mails three times a week *viâ* Weymouth, and everything depended on wind and tide. In a Jersey newspaper, the *Chronique* of 1816, I see the news from London was quoted at nine days old, so that before a stirring event was discussed in the island it was almost forgotten on the other side of the water. But that is all changed now. There is daily steam communication. Thousands of passengers pass between England and the Channel Islands every year, and each year brings an increase of visitors.

Talking of that, the British tourist is not a pleasant fellow-traveller, especially at sea. In the months of July and August, released from their prisons behind counters in Oxford Street or St. Paul's Churchyard, they rush off in search of a month's holiday by the seaside, and the Channel Islands are an increasingly favourite resort. They come on board, these tourists, at Southampton or Weymouth, dressed in loudly-patterned ulsters, sand-shoes, and hats with white puggarees, or green veils wound round them. They call loudly for brandy or beer, sing snatches of music-hall songs, and even execute *pas seuls* on the deck, in imitation of the last pantomime at Drury Lane or the Princess's. Nor does their hilarity end till the steamer—if it is the Southampton boat—has reached the Needles, and the rolling Channel waves begin to lift her gently up and down. After that, should there happen to be a light breeze—a “tidy lop on”—great silence usually falls on the ship, till finally nothing is heard but the throbbing of the screw, mingled with occasional groans and other horrible sounds not nice to talk about.

The approach to the islands is very picturesque, especially on a bright summer's morning. The Queen, in her “Journal in the Highlands,” speaking about it says: “The colouring and the effect of light were indescribably beautiful,” and “I never saw a more beautiful deep-blue sea: quite like Naples.” The red granite rocks, covered in the month of July with purple flowering heath, rise from a sparkling sea of so intense a blue that if an artist painted it faithfully on canvas it would be thought exaggerated and extravagant; but the air is very rarified, and the depths and variations of colour, from the palest greens to the deepest

cobalts and ultramarines, are only characteristic of the place. In the vegetation also there is a richness and luxuriance, as though a breath from the tropics had touched it. The myrtles grow like laurel trees. In sheltered spots a geranium will live out of doors winter after winter, till it covers the side of a house, and finally its stem becomes like the trunk of a tree. The passion-flower literally grows at the gate. There are some sweet little fern valleys, and lizards, often as much as a foot long, with emerald-green backs and orange stomachs, dart in and out of the long grass, or bask in the sunshine on old ivy-covered walls; they are quite harmless, and very pretty to look at. Toads, which are not so interesting, attain an unusually large size. Falle, in his history of Jersey, speaks of the toad as being a deformity in the island. It is certainly not pleasant, whilst strolling down a lane on a summer's night, to put your foot on a large soft substance almost as big as a soup-plate. No doubt these poor toads are also harmless and very good gardeners, but there exists a prejudice against them, and people don't get over it when it comes to close quarters.

Jersey, the largest of the Channel Islands, is within fifteen miles only of the coast of France. It is supposed to have been severed from the mainland about the year 769, nearly three hundred years before the battle of Hastings. The forest of Sisci, mentioned in ancient writings, lay between Jersey and the diocese of Coutances. The Channel Islands are now the only portion of the old Duchy of Normandy pertaining to the crown.

Jersey is under twenty miles long by five to six broad, and contains a population of nearly sixty thousand. It is rather over two hundred miles from London, thirty-three from St. Malo, and thirty from Granville; by either of which latter routes there is direct railroad communication with Paris. St. Helier, the principal town, is supposed to have taken its name from St. Hilaire, a hermit, who, it is related, was barbarously murdered by Norman pirates. The cell in which he once lived stands on a lofty rock just beyond Elizabeth Castle, and on the same ground where the old abbey formerly stood. Elizabeth Castle is surrounded by water except at low tide, and a detachment of artillery is quartered there. Charles II. is said to have taken refuge in Elizabeth Castle during some of his many wanderings, and in proof of the assertion a top-boot is shown—a very clumsy affair—which the merry monarch is supposed to have left behind him.

There are twelve parishes in Jersey, each having a parish church with a Jersey man for rector. It has a parliament of its own. The States consist of fifty members. Twelve gentlemen, who are called jurats, sit as magistrates in the Royal Court. It has a governor, a bailiff, an attorney-general, a solicitor-general. Every man is obliged to serve in the Militia, unless he can show good reasons for not being able to do so; and a grand review of

the troops takes place once a year, generally on the Queen's birthday.

There are two railroads in Jersey. One was opened in 1873, the other in 1874. Both start from St. Helier, one goes to Gorey through a rather remarkable cutting made through the solid rock below Fort Regent, the other skirts the picturesque bay of St. Aubins, and extends to within a short distance of the Corbière lighthouse. The whole distance this railway traverses is not above seven miles, but it is a great convenience for residents in the town or visitors to the island, who are thus able for a small sum of money to make an excursion to the wildest and grandest part of the sea coast. Going out to picnic on the rocks at the Corbière is fast becoming as fashionable as arranging parties at the Inventories was last year.

The railway traffic to Gorey is not so great as to St. Aubins, except perhaps in the race week, though Mont Orgueil Castle is well worth visiting, being connected as it is with many interesting historical events. Standing on the beautiful ivy-covered ramparts the coast of France is so distinctly visible that with the naked eye carts may be seen driven along the beach. The Jersey Derby is held annually on Gorey Common. The horses run are generally of local celebrity, and although on a miniature scale, the same programme is gone through as on Epsom Downs. Carriages full of smartly-dressed ladies are drawn up in lines, under a scorching sun. Bets are made—in moderation—luncheons eaten; champagne flows, and dancers, showmen, acrobats, together with gentlemen versed in the mysteries of the three-card trick, find it worth their while to come over from England expressly for the occasion.

Jersey is allowed to be celebrated for three things—potatoes, pears, and pretty girls. About the potato there can be no doubt. Sometimes in the St. Helier's harbour there are no less than seventeen to twenty steamers, some with the Blue Peter flying, and all waiting to carry off potatoes to the English markets. Advance and progress no doubt have their advantages, but in many respects a place is ruined for the inhabitants when its land-owners aspire to grow for Covent Garden; or at all events it is spoiled for those people whose limited means oblige them to live cheaply.

At one time in its history Jersey was considered a most desirable residence for retired officers, whose services Government had not rewarded with sufficient liberality, or people who were suffering from a misunderstanding with their creditors; but here things are changed: great cheapness is no longer a characteristic of the island, and it is known a man can be arrested for debt.

Appropos of the subject of arrests, a curious incident is said to have once happened in Jersey. A man who owed his creditors in England a sum, about which I will not venture to be too accurate, arrived in the island. One of his angry and baffled

creditors made up his mind to follow. Unfortunately for him his debtor was warned of his coming. Now, by a Jersey law then existing, an order to a sheriff was sufficient to have a man arrested. The debtor, seeing no other escape, was determined to be the first in the field, so on his creditor landing from the boat he was promptly arrested on a fictitious claim, and in default of finding security was at once lodged in prison. It is added, the ill-used creditor, not desiring to go further into the intricacies of Jersey law, was glad to purchase his liberty at any cost, and make tracks for England.

But to return to the potatoes. No less than 48,431 tons were shipped out of the Island of Jersey last year, and taking into consideration the size of the place, one marvels how it can be done. But in order to rear such a crop, season after season, more and more land is devoted to the purpose. The native Jersey man has the credit of being a prudent man, and as long as the demand continues, the supply is forthcoming. The early potato wants plenty of sun, so trees are ruthlessly cut down and everything that casts a shade is cleared away. *Côtils*, formerly so picturesque with their apple orchards, their green slopes covered with flowers and foliage, are now laid bare, and houses that look sufficiently imposing to warrant a lawn and geranium-beds have instead the potato-field right up to the hall door and under the window-sills. There can be no doubt but that Jersey is not as pretty as it used to be, and the reason is obvious. The potato mania is ruining its beauty. It even seems possible the time may come when a barren rock will be all that remains of what was once considered so lovely.

There is already a great dearth of pasture-land in Jersey, and the traditional Alderney cow standing up to its middle in long, sweet grass, will soon live only in pictures. Jersey cattle grow uncomfortably lean during the winter months, and some of the cart and farm horses look as if they were only kept up by the shafts.

Jersey cows obtain a large price. One sold not long ago in the parish of Trinity to Mr. Cooper, an American gentleman, fetched the sum of one thousand pounds, and no less than one thousand eight hundred and ninety-five cows and heifers were exported from the island in 1883.

The Chaumontel pear has for a very long while enjoyed an almost world-wide popularity, and it continues to hold its own. These particular pears are sold in the island from four to five pounds a hundred, and exported in large quantities every season. It is a winter pear and keeps till January. To be eaten in perfection, it should, as it approaches maturity, be sat up with all night and cut at its supreme moment!

Large quantities of grapes are also grown in Jersey, and the exportation of these and other fruits reaches over 27,450 cwt.

annually. The vineries built on the sunny slopes of the hills are of immense length, and yearly increase in numbers.

In St. Helier new and imposing markets have been lately built, at a cost of something like fifteen thousand pounds, and on market days the stalls, piled up with tempting fruit and flowers, are well worth seeing, the Norman caps, red-crossed shawl, and wooden shoes of the old women who sit behind the counters giving just a foreign touch to the general picturesqueness.

Speaking of the investment of public money for public buildings, Jersey at one period was nearly having a magnificent harbour. The story goes that the natives of Jersey were fired to undertake this great work by hearing that Prince Albert, on one of his visits to the island, had remarked that the inhabitants were evidently a curious people, for they built their harbours on dry land.

A splendid harbour, which was to enable ships to come in at all tides, so that passengers might embark or land without the help of small boats, was commenced in 1872, under the direction of Sir John Coode. That harbour was never finished. It was washed away by the force of the tide as fast as it was built, and after an outlay of two hundred thousand pounds, the undertaking was finally abandoned. Little now remains but the memorials of failure, in the shape of an uncompleted breakwater and the ruins of an unfinished pier.

Pretty girls fluctuate in Jersey, both in numbers and merit, much as they do in other places; but as having been the birth-place of Mrs. Langtry, the island claims to have won the prize for beauty. Mrs. Langtry, the only daughter of Dean Le Breton, was born at St. Saviour's Rectory; and was married to Mr. Langtry in St. Saviour's Church, in March, 1874. It was a very quiet wedding, and celebrated at six o'clock in the morning. Mrs. Langtry has been christened the "Jersey Lily," and the name is not inappropriate, for she possesses much of the charm and grace of a flower. She passed all her childhood and early womanhood in Jersey, little dreaming of the notoriety that was waiting for her island home, or of the prominent position she was destined to occupy. In Jersey she lived a simple country life. She walked or rode every day through the innumerable winding lanes, whose banks in the spring are carpeted with primroses and violets, and whose beauties are so little known to the tourist, who follows only the beaten track. When Mrs. Langtry has returned to the island she has again resumed her old habits, passing her time in sitting on the rocks in one of the bays, bathing, boating, or walking.

Jersey has been the birthplace of other celebrities besides Mrs. Langtry. Millais, although not actually born in the island, is of Jersey parentage, and his people are well known there. Oules, the now celebrated portrait-painter, is also a native of Jersey, and his father has lately died at St. Helier. About in the world, it has often been the remark how constantly you meet people be-

longing to or coming from Jersey, and it is a fact. There must be some magnetic attraction about the sunny little island, for people leave it and return to it again—though it may not be till long years after.

Except in the matter of house rent, taxes, spirits and tobacco, Jersey is now allowed to be no cheaper to live in than many other places, and clothing is certainly dearer. No doubt Victoria College has something to say to its popularity, for a first-rate education can be had there for a sum varying from twelve to fourteen pounds a year, according to the age of the boy. A great many young men educated at Victoria College have distinguished themselves at the universities, and in both the civil and military services. The parents of boys requiring to be educated can live more comfortably in Jersey than they could in England, and they can keep their children at home. They are not over-ridden by neighbours in a better position than themselves. Very few *nouveaux riches* people with brand new coats-of-arms would select Jersey as a residence. The society is equal, genial and sociable. People dine quietly at each other's houses, play tennis, arrange picnics, give dances, and enjoy life more, because of that absence of formality and stiffness which exists in England.

The Queen has paid two visits to Jersey. The first was in September of the year 1846; St. Helier was decorated and *en fête*. The ladies of the island assembled on the pier and strewed flowers; the States and Militia delivered addresses. The royal party drove about the island, visiting Mont Orgueil Castle and other places of interest. Her second visit was in the year 1859. In commemoration of her first visit Victoria College had meanwhile been built, and she was shown over it by Dr. Henderson, the present Dean of Carlisle, who was then the head master. As the Queen's coming to Jersey at all had been very uncertain, no preparations were made. The principal livery-stable keeper in the town hastily lined one of his carriages with white cambric, and in this conveyance she drove to the college and again visited different parts of the island, returning late in the afternoon on board the "Victoria and Albert."

The poor people in the country parishes were much disappointed when they were told it was the Queen they had seen. "Where was her crown," they asked, and "her ermine robes?" A queen looking like other people was an impossibility to their simple minds.

One thing much to be regretted in Jersey is the want of proper accommodation for visitors, and it would be worth while for an enterprising company to start a good hotel. A monster hotel has already been built, but it was badly managed, so never succeeded. It is now occupied by a large body of Jesuits, who took refuge in Jersey when turned out of France. There was a good deal of distrust about the wisdom of sheltering these same Jesuits, but

they proved a quiet, peaceable body of men, and have lived down their calumniators, though even now, among the ignorant, a report is still current that a subterranean passage connects the home of the Jesuits with the retreat of the nuns.

I must not end this little sketch of Jersey without mentioning the cabbage walking-stick, which may not inappropriately be called a feature of the island. In childhood we listen with eager interest to the story of "Jack and the Beanstalk," of how Jack put a bean into the ground and forthwith a stem grew till it passed out of sight. Now a Jersey cabbage does something nearly as wonderful. A particular seed grows a cabbage that attains a height of often ten feet. The cabbage, mounted on the top of this long pole, is simply a ridiculous object. It is not, however, for the cabbage that the seed is grown, but for the stalk. During the winter months the saving and thrifty Jersey man prepares these attractions for the tourist market. They are rubbed, varnished, topped and tipped, and when July and August come, displayed in tempting bundles at the shop doors. No genuine tourist leaves the island without carrying away with him at least one of these trophies. He is to be seen brandishing it as he drives round the island in a four-horse *char-à-banc*, very possibly his hat with the white puggaree hoisted on the top of it, as in the hilarity of his spirits he shouts a popular song or treats the passer-by to a personal joke.

When his visit to the island is over, and his funds not having held out sufficiently long to enable him to hire a conveyance, he is to be met hurrying down to the pier to catch the steamer, carrying his own portmanteau with one hand and grasping a bundle of cabbage walking-sticks with the other. These sticks are intended for presents and *souvenirs*, and are regarded as the alpenstock of the Channel Islands.

C. M. HAWKSFORD.

WAS IT A DREAM?

THE glittering gleeds were glowing on the hearth
As slowly closing my day-wearied eyes,
I sat alone. Nor was my calm uncalmed
By noisy pattering of children's feet, for they
Were tended then by Nature's sweetest nurse,
Progenitrix of visions pure and fresh
For the approaching morrow. They were
Asleep. In the serenity of my half-sleep
Kind Fancy visioned a most transient light,
Reflected from emblazoned golden steps,
Extending high above the ethereal realm,
And seemed to lead where jewel-garnished gates
Swung open to the pavements brighter still,
On which were passing, clothed in dazzling white,
Rare forms of men and women. These, clust'ring near
The massive gates, now fill the radiant steps;
Then some descended, and my vision brought
Down to the step on which I seemed to lie,
A form, clothed as with draperies of light.
Such joyous ecstasy now filled my soul,
That, tongue-bound, gazing, listening reverently,
I heard a voice, toned, as by angel hands
On agate anvils with a sledge of gold,

“Dear soul,

“Mourn not for me, for thou would'st mourn in vain;
Grieve not for me, for thy grief is my pain;
But for thy tears, my bliss could have no stain.

“My bliss is greater than thou deem'st could be,
Therefore rejoice in my felicity,
Watching our dear ones, clothed in purity.”

The voice was softened, and the erstwhile steps
Seemed to be gathered through the blazoned gates,
As now an angel host sweeps from the height
With snow-white wings, dropping a silver dew
Which hid the Golden City from my sight.
Lost in adoring, with a quickened joy
Filling my heart, I strove again to see
The form of her whose soul had late
Been freed from its most finely-sculptured mould,
But all in vain. The shimmering halo breaks,
The vision leaves my soul wrapt in a joy
Of too full complement.

The hearth is lone.

Rousing myself from this too happy dream,
I could have prayed, that, but for those
Watched by the vision with a mother's care,
I might again ascend the golden steps
Now fading, veil'd by falling silver dew.

H. CATTERSON-SMITH.

JOHN MADDISON MORTON.

THE present generation is familiar enough with "Box and Cox," that best and brightest of good old English farces, and hundreds of other plays of the same kind, that were written years ago by one of the driest of humorists and most genial of gentlemen; but few young playgoers, I take it, are aware how much the stage owes to John Maddison Morton. Of the form and features of one of the most prolific writers for the stage, I believe many of my own contemporaries to be absolutely ignorant. They know little of his antecedents or history, and yet they, and their fathers before them, have laughed right merrily over the quips and cranks, the quaint turns of expression, the odd freaks of humour that distinguished a writer of fun belonging to the old school. No one has ever filled the place left vacant by John Maddison Morton. Managers for many years past have assumed that the public does not want farces, and are content to tolerate badly-acted rubbish before the play of the evening begins. But a strong reaction is setting in. The pit, and gallery, are not content any longer to remain open-mouthed, whilst the scenes of the play of the evening are being set, or to be deluded into applauding the silly stuff that is nowadays served up as farce, and in which the principal actors and actresses do not condescend to appear. Why, when I first began to consider myself a regular playgoer, some five-and-twenty years ago, when I struggled with the young men of my time into the pit, I could see, quite irrespective of the play of the evening, Webster at the Adelphi in "One Touch of Nature," say at seven o'clock in the evening; Toole and Paul Bedford and Selby and Billington and Bob Romer, always in some favourite farce that began or ended the evening's amusement, at the Haymarket; Buckstone, old Rogers, and Chippendale in such plays as "The Rough Diamond" at the Haymarket, with an after-farce for Compton, Howe, and Walter Gordon; and at the Strand such excellent little plays as "Short and Sweet" or the "Fair Encounter," in which we were sure to find Jemmy Rogers and Johnnie Clarke, and most probably Belford, Marie Wilton, Fanny Josephs, and Miss Swanborough. In those days artists were not above their business, which was and ever should be to amuse the public; they were not taken up and patronized by society; they did not lecture their audiences, but were modest, hard-working, and unassuming. There were no young fops in the ranks of the dramatic profession with extravagant salaries and

diminutive talent, and the young ladies who adopted the profession had to work, and work hard, in order to obtain a name. Farces were then well acted, for the simple reason that the best members of the company played in them. It was worth paying for the pit at half or full price when Robson was set down for "Retained for the Defence" or "Boots at the Swan," and when Leigh Murray, most accomplished of comedians, appeared in "His First Champagne."

John Maddison Morton was born on January 3, 1811, at the lovely Thameside village of Pangbourne, above Reading. His father was the famous dramatist Thomas Morton, author of "Speed the Plough," "Town and Country," "The Way to get Married," "Secrets worth Knowing," "Cure for the Heartache," "School of Reform," &c., &c. The elder Morton resided at Pangbourne for thirty-five years, and only removed to London in 1828. It must have been on the lovely reaches, backwaters, and weirs of the lovely Thames that the future author of "Box and Cox" acquired such a love of angling, and became so enthusiastic and excellent a fisherman. A few years ago I was in the habit of meeting Maddison Morton at the hospitable table of my old friend Robert Reece. They were both members of the old Dramatic Authors' Society, and on committee days Reece would bring the jovial dramatist home to dinner, when over a glass of old port wine, and with frequent intervals of snuff-taking, he would delight us with stories of actors, and many adventures with the rod and line. In fact, he told us that he devoted the best part of his after-life to two principal objects, "Fishing and Farce-Writing."

But to return to his younger days. He was educated in Paris and Germany from 1817 to 1820. After that he went to school at Islington for a short time, and from 1820 to 1827 we find the future dramatist at Dr. Richardson's celebrated seminary at Clapham. Under the roof of the famous author of the English dictionary he found, and soon took for companions, Julian Young, Charles James Mathews, John Kemble, Henry Kemble, John Liston, Dick Tattersall, young Terry, son of Terry the actor, whose widow subsequently married the lexicographer, Dr. Richardson. In 1832 Maddison Morton was appointed to a clerkship in Chelsea Hospital by Lord John Russell, but he did not appear to relish the desk any more than his subsequent friends, W. S. Gilbert and Robert Reece. He did not wait patiently for a pension, like Tom Taylor, Anthony Trollope, &c., but got sick of government office work in 1840, when he resigned his situation.

It was in April, 1835, that Maddison Morton produced his first farce, at the little theatre in Tottenham Street, destined afterwards to flourish as the Prince of Wales Theatre, and to be the nursery of Robertsonian comedy. The farce was called "My First Fit of the Gout," and the principal parts were played by

Wrench, Morris Barrett, and Mrs. Nisbett. As I have said before, Maddison Morton lived in the happy days when farces were popular, when programmes were ample, and when actors were not ashamed of their work. Amongst the cultivated artists who have played in Maddison Morton's farces are the elder Farren, Liston, Keeley, Buckstone, Wright, Compton, Harley, Robson, Mrs. Glover, Mrs. Stirling, Charles Mathews, and many more of our own day, such as Toole, Howe, &c., &c.

I once asked Maddison Morton some particulars concerning his subsequent career as a dramatist, when he observed quaintly enough, "My dear boy, it would never do for me to blow my own trumpet. In the first place, I haven't got one, and I am sure I could not blow it if I had." It is sometimes brought as a charge against Maddison Morton that his plays are taken from the French, and as such are devoid of original merit. But how little such as these understand Maddison Morton or his incomparable style. He may have borrowed his plots from France, but what trace of French writing is to be found in the immortal "Box and Cox," or "Woodcock's Little Game"? "Box and Cox" is taken from two French farces, one called "Frisette," and the other "Une Chambre à Deux Lits," but the writing of the farce as much belongs to the man, and is as distinctly original and personal to him as anything ever said or written by Henry James Byron. For my own poor part, I consider that Maddison Morton is funnier than any writer for the stage in his day. It is the kind of dry, sententious humour that tickles one far more than the extravagances, the puns, and the strained tomfooleries of the modern writer of burlesque, the very burlesque that Maddison Morton considers was the death-blow to the old-fashioned English farce. Players may yet find it profitable to revive the taste for short farces, and they need not hesitate to do so, because several excellent and funny plays by the author of "Box and Cox," remain unused. Benjamin Webster told Maddison Morton, not long before his death, that he had made more money by farces than by any other description of drama. This is not difficult to account for. The author was certainly not overpaid; the farces were evidently well acted; it cost next to nothing to produce them, and if successful the world and his wife went to see them.

Writing to a friend the other day, Maddison Morton observes:—"The introduction of 'Burlesque' gave the first 'knock-down blow' to the old-fashioned farce. I hoped against hope that its popularity would return, and that some employment might still be found for my pen. I was disappointed, and as the only means of discharging liabilities which I had in the meantime unavoidably contracted, I was compelled to part with my copyrights, the accumulation of a life's laborious and not unsuccessful work."

It is interesting to note that Maddison Morton's "Box and Cox" was the pioneer of the movement that resulted in the literary

and musical partnership of Gilbert and Sullivan. If it had not been for Burnand's "Cox and Box" in all probability the "Sorcerer" and the rest of the operas would never have been written. And happily the reign of Maddison Morton is not yet over. On Monday, 7th December, 1885, was produced at Toole's Theatre a three-act farce called "Going It," that kept the house in a continual roar of laughter. It is in the old vein, bright, witty, and bristling with verbal quip. When the farce was over the call for "author" was raised but no one imagined that it would be responded to. But to the surprise of all Mr. Toole led on an elderly gentleman of the old school, prim, neat, well set up and rosy-cheeked as a winter apple. This was Maddison Morton. At last the young playgoer had seen the author of "Box and Cox."

In the year 1881, on the nomination of Her Majesty, this great and accomplished gentleman, who never mixed in Bohemian or literary society, was appointed a "poor brother of the Charter House." Who that has read Thackeray is not familiar with the fine old Hospital of "Greyfriars," and its pleasant old "codd's" under whose shadow and in whose society Colonel Newcome breathed his last, and said "Adsum." Here in this pleasant retreat, quiet and retired although in the heart of the busiest part of the city, Maddison Morton met another 'Brother' John A. Heraud, a dramatist and dramatic critic who had often sat in judgment on Morton's plays. What chats about old times they must have, within those venerable walls that circle round the poet-dramatist and the dramatic farce-writer. "Here," writes Maddison Morton in his well-known cheerful and contented frame of mind, "I shall doubtless spend the short time I may have to live, and then be laid in the quiet little churchyard at Bow—not, I hope, entirely 'unwept, unhonoured, nor unsung.'"

Good, kindly, gentle heart, thus to speak, with such fervour and such faith, in the long evening of your days! Shut up in your cloistered home, the hearts of those who had the honour and pleasure of knowing you often go out to you! And on the stage the laughter evoked by your fanciful wit, and the true humour that sprang from your merry heart, will soothe you and delight many more who honour your excellent name.

CLEMENT SCOTT.

FIRST COME, FIRST SERVED.

COMEDIETTA.

By JOHN MADDISON MORTON, Author of "Box and Cox."

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

COLONEL CHALLENGER.

HARRY BARTON.

BASIL ROYSTON.

MRS. TEMPLETON.

JULIA TEMPLETON

JOSEPHINE TEMPLETON } (her nieces).

SCENE.—Mrs. Templeton's Villa at Roehampton.

SCENE.—*Handsomely-furnished apartments, large French window at c. looking on a garden. Doors R. H. and L. H. At R. H. a table, on which is an open album. At L. C. another table covered with papers, &c.; table, sofa, chairs, &c.*

Enter MRS. TEMPLETON *at c.*, followed by COLONEL CHALLENGER.

COL. Cousin Martha, you are wrong, wrong, wrong! a thousand times wrong!

MRS. T. Cousin Samuel, I'm right, right, right! *ten* thousand times right!

COL. (*aside*). Obstinate old woman!

MRS. T. (*aside*). Pig-headed old man!

COL. What possible reason can you have for setting your face against Josephine's getting married? It's downright tyranny! Call yourself an aunt, indeed!

MRS. T. My reason is a very simple one. Her elder sister, Julia, must find a husband first.

COL. First come, first served—eh? Really, my dear Martha, I must say that, for a sensible woman, you are by many degrees the most prejudiced, the most self-willed, the most—

MRS. T. Of course I am! But you know very well that when I once *do* make up my mind to anything—

COL. You stick to it like a fly to a "catch-em-alive-oh."

MRS. T. I don't choose that Julia should suffer what *I* did! *I* had a sister, Dorothy Jane, four years my junior, who married before *I* did. Do you think that was pleasant? who supplied me with a sprinkling of nephews and nieces before *I* had a husband. Do you think *that* was pleasant? who gave garden

parties, balls, concerts, to which all the world flocked, and surrounded her with flattery, adulation, whilst *I* was neglected, extinguished, regularly snuffed out. Do you think *that* was pleasant? Well, it is *this* humiliation that I am determined to spare Julia.

COL. Well, you didn't lose much by waiting. I'm sure Tom Templeton was as good a creature as ever breathed—didn't live long, poor fellow, but cut up remarkably well considering.

MRS. T. Leaving his two nieces, his brother's children, to my charge, with ten thousand pounds each.

COL. As a wedding portion, which, I must say, you didn't seem in a hurry to part with.

MRS. T. You know my conditions. You have only to find a husband for Julia.

COL. I? When she refused half the good-looking fellows within ten miles round! If she *does* mean to marry, she takes her time about it, that I will say; it never seems to occur to her that she's keeping her poor sister out in the cold!

MRS. T. You may be mistaken, cousin. I spoke to Julia only yesterday, and she expressed herself in terms which convinced me that, were she to receive a suitable offer—

COL. She'd accept it? Well, I'm glad she's coming to her senses at last; and I shall go away all the more comfortable in my mind.

MRS. T. Go away?

COL. Yes. I'm off back again to Cheltenham. Touch of gout—liver queer; besides, my work here is done. Your husband's affairs, which I confess appeared to me at first sight to be in a state of hopeless confusion, are now clearly and satisfactorily arranged, thanks to my young colleague, Harry Barton, who, I must say, worked like a nigger over them. By-the-bye, he's another victim to Miss Julia's caprice and fastidiousness—she actually snubbed the poor fellow before she'd time even to look at him, much less know him.

MRS. T. Well, you'll confess he bears his disappointment with becoming resignation (*satirically*).

COL. Yes; he's getting used to it, like the eels. He doesn't see the use of crying over spilt milk. By-the-bye, there's another matter of five thousand pounds coming to the girls out of the Hampshire property. But Barton will give you all the particulars.

MRS. T. I'm sure, cousin, I feel deeply indebted to you.

COL. Not half as much as you *ought* to feel to Tom Barton. Hasn't he been here twice a week for the last month, up to his elbows in leases, loans, mortgages, and the deuce knows what? Oh! here he comes.

Enter HARRY BARTON at c., a roll of papers under his arm, a lawyer's blue bag in his hand, which he deposits on chair.

BART. (*bowing to MRS. TEMPLETON*). Your servant, madam

(to COLONEL). Ah! my dear colonel, I hope you're well. But perhaps I ought to apologize for entering unannounced. You may be engaged?

MRS. T. Not at all. I am aware, Mr. Barton, how deeply I am in your debt; but now that the business which served as your first introduction here is satisfactorily concluded, pray remember my house is open to you as before (BARTON bows). You will kindly excuse me now—a few orders to give (*curtseys and exit L. H.; at the same moment the door at R. H. slowly opens and JOSEPHINE peeps in*).

JOSEPHINE. Is the coast clear? (*watching MRS. TEMPLETON as she goes out*). She's gone at last! (*runs in*).

BART. (*meeting her*). Jo, dear Jo (*taking her hand, which he is about to kiss*).

JOSEPHINE. Wait a minute! (*looking after MRS. TEMPLETON*). She's quite disappeared; now you may! (*holding out her hand to BARTON, who kisses it*). And now (*turning to COLONEL*), you dear, good, kind old uncle. Uncle is it, or cousin? I never know which.

COL. Don't you? It's simple enough. Your mother's elder brother's second—never mind. Call me uncle.

JOSEPHINE. Well? Have you spoken to Aunt Martha?

BART. Yes. Have you broken the ice?

COL. Cracked it, that's all!

JOSEPHINE. And what was the result? Did she consent or not?

BART. Did she say yes or no?

JOSEPHINE. Why don't you speak? (*impatiently*).

BART. Why don't you say something? (*ditto*).

COL. How the deuce can I, when you won't let me get in a word edgeways? Well, then, my poor young friends, sorry I've no good news for you; the old story over again—Miss Julia stops the way.

BART. And yet Mrs. Templeton's pressing invitation to me to visit at her house—

COL. Is easily explained. She doesn't even suspect that your affections have been transferred from her elder to her younger niece.

JOSEPHINE. Then you should have told her—then there would have been an explosion!

COL. Yes! which would have blown Master Harry clean out of the street door! No, no! don't despair; Julia will find a husband—sooner or later!

JOSEPHINE. Sooner or later? But what am I to do in the meantime?

BART. Yes! what are we to do in the meantime?

JOSEPHINE. I'm sure she's had plenty of offers; but one was too young—another was too old—one was too rich—another wasn't rich enough; even poor Harry here, though he followed

her about like her shadow, and I'm sure made himself sufficiently ridiculous—even *he* wasn't good enough for her ladyship! It's downright absurd being so particular. I'm sure *I* wasn't!

BART. No, dear Jo! *you* took pity on me at once.

JOSEPHINE. No, not *quite* at once. I didn't *jump* at you. But what—what is to be done?

COL. Have patience!

JOSEPHINE. Patience? *Haven't* I been patient for the last five weeks?

BART. Five weeks and three days!

JOSEPHINE. Five weeks and three days! (*suddenly*). Oh! such an idea! such a capital notion! Listen! Julia must find a husband, or a husband must be found for Julia!—that's a settled point.

COL. } (*together*). Quite so!

BART. }

JOSEPHINE. Well, then, as she sets her face against a *young* one—

COL. Yes! as she sets her face against a young one—

JOSEPHINE. And turns up her nose at a handsome one—

COL. And turns up her nose at a handsome one—

JOSEPHINE. She might find *you* more to her taste! (*to COLONEL*).

COL. She might find me more to her—(*seeing JOSEPHINE laughing*). So, Miss Saucy one, you're poking fun at me, are you? Then you'll be good enough to find another victim, I mean another admirer, for Miss Julia! Egad, I must make haste and pack up or I shall lose my train! Come along with me, little one! Good-bye, Barton! Keep up your spirits! Recollect you've still got *me*!

JOSEPHINE. And *me*, Harry! Not yet, but you *will*!

[*Exeunt COLONEL and JOSEPHINE at door R. H.*]

BART. Dear Josephine! What a contrast to her cold, insensible, apathetic sister! I, who loved her so sincerely, so devotedly, made such a thorough spooney of myself! and was even weak enough to believe I was not quite indifferent to her! I confess I felt hurt—considerably hurt—infernally hurt; but if she flattered herself I should be inconsolable, she never was more mistaken in her life! She little dreamt how soon I should find a cure for my infatuation in the charms of her angelic sister! Dear Josephine! And to think there's no hope of my calling her mine till we find somebody to call her sister *his*! By-the-bye, here are a few papers I must look over (*seating himself at table and opening papers*).

ROYS. (*heard without*). Very well; take my card to Mrs. Templeton. I'll wait. I'm in no hurry!

BART. Hey day? who have we here?

Enter BASIL ROYSTON at c.

ROYS. (*coming down—seeing BARTON*). I beg pardon, sir!

BART. (*rising*). Sir—I—

ROYS. Be seated, I beg.

BART. Not till you set me the example! (*pointing to chair—they seat themselves*).

ROYS. Like me, sir, you are doubtless waiting to see Mrs. Templeton?

BART. No, sir!

ROYS. Oh! One of the family, perhaps? Possibly a friend?

BART. Yes, sir, a friend! (*aside*). He's very inquisitive!

ROYS. (*looking at album*). What charming water-colours—perfect gems!

BART. They are the work of Mrs. Templeton's elder niece. Are you an artist?

ROYS. No, merely an amateur. And you?

BART. A humble member of the legal profession.

ROYS. A lawyer—eh? (*aside*). By Jove! here's a chance for me! I've half a mind to—he looks the very picture of good nature, and six and eightpence won't ruin me! (*aloud*). Might I venture, sir, on so very slight an acquaintance, to solicit your professional opinion? (*BARTON bows*). It is rather a delicate subject, a very *peculiar* subject.

BART. I'm all attention, sir! merely observing that the sooner you begin—

ROYST. The sooner I shall have done. Exactly. Then I'll come to the point at once. I would ask you whether, in your opinion, a promise of marriage, written under *certain circumstances* and under *certain conditions*, must necessarily be binding?

BART. Such conditions being—

ROYS. First and foremost—that the lady should have her head altered!

BART. (*astonished*). Have her head altered?

ROYS. I mean, have her hair dyed!

BART. Which condition the lady has not complied with?

ROYS. No, sir! It's as red as ever!

BART. Then, sir, I've no hesitation in saying that the promise falls to the ground!

ROYS. Thank you, sir! (*seizing BARTON'S hand and shaking it—aside and sighing*). Poor Sophia!

BART. May I inquire the name of my *new* client? (*smiling*).

ROYS. Royston!

BART. The Roystons of Banbury?

ROYS. Yes, Banbury—where the cakes come from.

BART. I was aware that Mrs. Templeton expected you on a matter of business—a certain sum of money, I believe?

ROYS. Yes, coming to the family from some Hampshire property!

BART. I imagined Mr. Royston was a much older person.

ROYS. I see! You mean Jonathan!

BART. Jonathan?

ROYS. Yes, my brother! the head of the firm! he's twenty years my senior! But as he could not spare the time to come, he sent *me*!

BART. (*aside*). It's worth the trial! decidedly worth it! (*looking aside at ROYSTON*). Young, gentlemanly, sufficiently good-looking, good family! Here goes! (*aloud*). Excuse my candour, but I think I guess your motive in putting the professional question you did just now! *you* are the writer of the promise of marriage, and you are desirous of contracting *another* alliance—eh?

ROYS. I don't care about it, but Jonathan does! (*aside, and sighing again*). Poor Sophia!

BART. Perhaps you have some party in view?

ROYS. No! But I'm on the look-out.

BART. And, no doubt, anxious to succeed?

ROYS. Not particularly—but Jonathan is.

BART. Perhaps that is the object of your visit *here*?

ROYS. Eh? Is there a marriageable young lady here?

BART. Yes!

ROYS. I should like to see her!

BART. Nothing more easy.

ROYS. What age?

BART. Twenty.

ROYS. Any fortune?

BART. Ten thousand!

ROYS. That 'd just suit Jonathan! Pretty?

BART. Charming!

ROYS. That 'd just suit *me*! Egad, suppose I try my luck? I've half a mind!

BART. Have a *whole* one! I've a notion you'll succeed!

ROYS. But I know nobody here!

BART. I beg your pardon! you know *me*!

ROYS. Eh!

BART. Known me for *years* (*with intention*).

ROYS. (*suddenly seeing BARTON'S meaning*). Of course I have!

BART. Ever since we were children!

ROYS. Babies!

BART. We went to the same school together!

ROYS. Of course we did!

BART. At Tunbridge Wells!

ROYS. Yes! At Bagnigge Wells.

BART. And we have been friends ever since!

ROYS. (*enthusiastically*). *Bosom friends*! And you'll really do all you can to serve me?

BART. Of course I will! (*aside*)—and myself at the same time!

ROYS. A thousand thanks, my dear—by-the-bye, what shall I call you?

BART. Harry! And you?

ROYS. Basil! (*grasping BARTON'S hand*). Sophia might scratch your eyes out, but Jonathan will bless you!

BART. Hush! (*seeing MRS. TEMPLETON, who enters at L. H.*).

MRS. T. (*to ROYSTON*). Sorry to have kept you waiting, Mr. Royston.

ROYS. I am here, madam, as my brother's representative!

MRS. T. I am aware of it. Mr. Barton, allow me to introduce to you—

BART. No necessity for it, madam! Basil is an old friend of mine!

ROYS. Yes, madam! I little thought of meeting an old schoolfellow here! (*shaking BARTON'S hand warmly*). Some years ago now—eh, Tom?

BART. (*aside to him*). Harry!

ROYS. Harry!

MRS. T. So you were schoolfellows—eh?

ROYS. Yes, ma'am! at—Bagnigge Wells!

BART. (*hastily aside to him*). Tunbridge!

ROYS. Of course! Tunbridge!

MRS. T. You must have had some difficulty in recognizing each other?

ROYS. I had!—very *considerable* difficulty, I assure you!

BART. We should have met earlier, no doubt, but for my friend's lengthened absence in Italy (*significantly to ROYSTON*).

ROYS. Yes! Ah! charming country—for those who don't mind the cold! (*on a sign from BARTON*). I mean, the heat!

MRS. T. (*aside and looking at ROYSTON*). Really a vastly agreeable young man!

Enter COLONEL at R. H.

COL. So Royston has arrived, has he? (*seeing BASIL*). Hey day! why, this is Basil—his younger brother!

ROYS. At your service, colonel!

MRS. T. You are acquainted, then?

COL. I was intimate with his mother's family—indeed, I may say I was the means of getting him a nomination to the Blue Coat school.

BART. (*aside*). This is deuced awkward!

MRS. T. The Blue Coat school? I thought you said Tunbridge Wells?

ROYS. (*recollecting*). Yes! that was before—I mean after—

COL. (*aside and suspiciously*). I suspect these young fellows are playing some little game of their own; and, what's more, I can pretty well guess what it is!

MRS. T. (*aside to COLONEL*). As Mr. Royston is an entire stranger to me, may I ask you, Cousin Samuel, what is the opinion you have formed of him?

COL. Oh! a very charming young man indeed! Most respectable family! an ample income already, with great expectations from a couple of aunts and a godmother! A little wild at present, perhaps, but he'll soon settle down when he's married! Ah! happy the woman who makes a conquest of such a man! (*aside*). There! now I'm in the conspiracy too!

MRS. T. (*to ROYSTON*). Your friend Mr. Barton does not leave here till to-morrow; you, I hope, will also defer your departure till then?

BART. (*quickly to ROYSTON*). Of course you will! Of course he will! (*to MRS. T.*) (*to ROYSTON*). You'll be only too delighted! He'll be only too delighted! (*to MRS. TEMPLETON*).

MRS. T. Ah! here's my niece! (*going up to meet JULIA, who enters at C.*).

ROYS. (*seeing JOSEPHINE, who at the same moment enters at R. H.*). Look! what a charming creature!

BART. No, no! it isn't she! it's the other! look there! (*pointing to JULIA*) There's a figure! there's a symmetry! look at those finely-chiselled features!

ROYS. Yes, yes! but still, in my opinion—(*looking admiringly at JOSEPHINE*)—

BART. Your opinion, indeed! Pshaw! what do you know about it?

JOSEPHINE (*aside to COLONEL and pointing to ROYSTON*). What! has Harry found somebody already?

MRS. T. Julia, my dear, allow me to present Mr. Royston, an old friend of Mr. Barton's! (*JULIA curtsays stiffly to ROYSTON*).

BART. (*to ROYSTON*). There's a curtsey! that's what I call a curtsey!

ROYS. Yes! but, as I said before, of the two I prefer—(*looking at JOSEPHINE*).

BART. You prefer, indeed! Surely I must know better than you! (*to JULIA*). My friend Royston—a distinguished amateur of the fine arts, is in raptures with your sketches, Miss Julia! (*JULIA curtsays stiffly again*).

JOSEPHINE (*to JULIA*). Why don't you thank Mr. Royston, sister?

ROYS. (*aside to BARTON*). Oh! she's the sister—eh?

BART. (*with pretended indifference*). Yes, a little, harmless, insignificant schoolgirl—

ROYS. Still, I repeat, if I had to choose between them—

BART. Pshaw! my dear fellow, if you only knew what nonsense you're talking! (*aside*). Zounds! I hope he isn't going to fall in love with Josephine!

COL. Sorry to interrupt, but my time is precious, and business

must be attended to. Mr. Royston, will you step into the dining-room with your papers? Barton, you'll come too?

JOSEPHINE (*hastily aside to BARTON*). I understand it all, Harry. A very nice young man indeed! and likely to stand a good chance. Don't you think so? Where *did* you pick him up so soon?

BART. Hush! I'll explain everything another time!

[COLONEL and MRS. TEMPLETON *exeunt* at R. H., followed by BARTON and ROYSTON. ROYSTON stops, turns, and makes a profound bow to JOSEPHINE. BARTON pushes him out.]

JOSEPHINE (*aside*). I wonder what she thinks of him? (*aloud*). A very gentlemanly young man, Mr. Royston, don't you think so, Julia?

JULIA (*indifferently*). I scarcely looked at him.

JOSEPHINE (*aside*). That's not very encouraging! (*aloud*). How do you manage to find so many admirers? I can't!

JULIA (*smiling*). Hitherto perhaps I may have had the lion's share of attention, homage, and professed admiration; but *your* turn will come!

JOSEPHINE. It's a long time about it! You are so difficult to please. And poor Mr. Royston, I suppose, will be snubbed like the rest!

JULIA (*reprovingly*). Josephine! surely you don't imagine—

JOSEPHINE. That there is some attraction for him here? Of course I do! It can't be Aunt Martha—nor I! *I'm only a child!* (*with affected humility*).

JULIA. Josephine, you speak as though you were piqued! vexed—I might almost say *envious*!

JOSEPHINE. Envious? I? of what?

JULIA (*sighing*). Of what, indeed! Ah, dear one, the privileges of an elder sister are not so enviable after all! What is often her lot? To be constantly exposed to flattery—adulation from the lips of strangers—compelling her to assume an extreme reserve in order to modify the exaggerated and at times indelicate encomiums of relatives and friends. What is the necessary result? Doubt, distrust, suspicion—nay, even prejudice, oftentimes unjust, against those who profess a desire to please! On this impulse I have acted—an impulse dictated by self-respect and a due sense of my own dignity!

JOSEPHINE (*aside*). What a serious tone! (*aloud*). But just think how cruelly, how unjustly you *may* have acted. And I'm sure, as for Mr. Royston—

JULIA. Mr. Royston again! Silly child!

JOSEPHINE. Child?—Perhaps I could mention a little fact that—that, but I won't! (*aside*). Good-bye to my secret if I did! (*aloud*). Good-bye!

JULIA. Are you going to leave me too?

JOSEPHINE. Haven't I got to write out all the invitations for our ball on the 23rd?

JULIA. Your birthday?—true.

JOSEPHINE. Yes; that is the *professed* reason—but of course it is on *your* account that it is given.

JULIA (*reproachfully*). Josephine!

JOSEPHINE. I know a younger sister's duty, Miss Templeton (*makes a low curtsey and exit L. H.*).

JULIA. Josephine! Sister!—Did she but know how she misjudges me! How heavily I have been punished for that pride, that apparent insensibility, with which she reproaches me! Oh, Harry! Harry! could you but tell how bitterly I have repented. But surely, surely the cruel wicked indifference with which I treated his affection, his devotion, cannot have entirely destroyed them—some *little* spark of the old flame must still remain! Else why is he so constantly here? Why does he still seem to seek my presence? At any rate, he shall see that I am no heartless coquette; and when this Mr. Royston presents himself, as I'm sure he *will*—(*seeing ROYSTON, who enters from R.H.*)—I thought so!

ROYST. (*aside*). She's alone! She's decidedly handsome. Yet, as I said before, there's something about the other, that—that—(*aloud and bowing to JULIA*)—Miss Templeton!

JULIA (*curtseying*). Sir! the business matter in which you are engaged is, I presume, settled?

ROYST. Yes; the signatures alone are required.

JULIA. In that case perhaps I had better—(*about to retire*).

ROYST. One moment, I beg! (*aside*). She's decidedly *very* handsome! Still—I don't know how it is—but there is certainly something about the other, that—that—(*aloud*). Before leaving this house to-morrow, with my new acquaintance—I mean, *my old friend Barton*—

JULIA (*quickly*). Mr. Barton leaves to-morrow?

ROYST. Yes, alas! I say "alas," because one day only is now left for me to admire your physical attractions, your mental accomplishments—

JULIA. Oh, sir! Believe me, my sister is far more accomplished than I am.

ROYST. Far be it from me to deny it. Still, from the highly eulogistic terms in which every one speaks of you—your sister among the first—

JULIA. Ah, sir! Dear Josephine is so amiable, so affectionate, so good, so loving, so angelic—

ROYST. (*aside*). She sticks up for her sister, that I will say! (*aloud*). Still, there are *certain* attractions which we can all judge of by our own eyes.

JULIA (*quickly*). And who can possess them to a greater degree than Josephine? Such exquisite grace—such absolute perfection of form and feature—

ROYST. (*aside*). Her sister again! If we go on at this rate,

we shan't get on very fast! (*aloud*). Allow me to be frank with you, my brother Jonathan—but perhaps you've never heard of Jonathan? Jonathan Royston, of Banbury—where the cakes come from—well, he often reproaches me with being what he calls rather wild, and fast, and flighty——

JULIA. The only fault I find with Josephine, dear child. She is so giddy, so thoughtless, so excitable! What a capital match you'd make! Ha! ha! ha!

ROYS. (*aside*). That's a pretty broad hint! (*aloud*). And he—I mean Jonathan—says that the best thing I could do would be to get married!

JULIA. The very conclusion I have come to about Josephine.

ROYS. (*aside*). It really looks as if she wanted to turn me over to her sister. (*aloud*). And having received the flattering assurance that my pretensions to your hand might possibly not be unsuccessful——

JULIA. From whom, pray? Doubtless, from my aunt.

ROYS. Oh no! From my dear old friend, Barton.

JULIA (*indignantly*). Mr. Barton? He? No, no! I cannot, *will not* believe it!

ROYS. I'm sure he will not deny it—and see, fortunately he's here!

Enter BARTON at door R. H.

BART. Miss Templeton, your presence is required in the drawing-room.

JULIA (*very coldly and seating herself at table*). Presently.

BART. (*aside to ROYSTON*). Well, what news?

ROYS. (*aside*). All right! At least, if it isn't this one, it'll be the other! One of the two!

BART. What do you mean by "the other?"

ROYS. The "little harmless, insignificant schoolgirl," you know!

BART. (*aside*). Confound the fellow!

ROYS. You first put the notion of marriage into my head, and I won't leave this house a bachelor; I'll marry somebody! I leave you together! You'll plead my cause, won't you? And pitch it strong, won't you? I shall be all anxiety to know the result—because if *she* won't have me, I can fall back on the other. Don't you see? (*shaking BARTON'S hand and runs out at c.*)

BART. (*aside and looking at JULIA*). To have to plead the cause of another, when, in spite of me, her presence *will* recall the past, painful, humiliating as it is!

JULIA (*with indifference*). Your friend has left you, Mr. Barton?

BART. He has, *Miss Templeton*; but he has left an advocate to intercede with you on his behalf.

JULIA (*satirically*). A willing and an earnest one, no doubt, who probably has already furnished him with a detailed catalogue of my tastes, habits, pursuits, disposition——

BART. (*aside*). He's been blabbing! (*aloud*). Surely he cannot have betrayed my confidence?

JULIA (*with suppressed anger*). The charge of "betrayal of confidence" should rather be levelled at one who by his intimacy with a family, into which he is admitted on terms of friendship, is enabled to study the characters of its members for the purpose of retailing the result of his observations to others!

BART. I will not affect to misunderstand your reproof. It is true that I spoke of you to Mr. Royston in terms which you fully merit—that I even told him your heart was free.

JULIA. Perfectly, absolutely free! You undertook to be his advocate, with such zeal, such earnestness, one might almost imagine you had some personal interest.

BART. And what if I *had* an interest—a *powerful* interest?

JULIA (*quickly*). Indeed?

BART. Yes. And after the somewhat harsh rejection I met with at your hands—which, no doubt, I fully merited—what greater proof can I give of the esteem in which I still hold you than to confide my secret to you?

JULIA (*starting*). A secret? (*aside*). What can he mean?

BART. That, on the eve of leaving your family, I should feel far less regret could I but indulge in the hope of ever becoming connected with it by a closer tie.

JULIA (*aside and joyfully*). Can it be? Has he forgotten? Forgiven? Can he still care for me? (*aloud*). But why this silence—this want of confidence in me?

BART. Frankly, because we feared you would oppose our wishes, our hopes.

JULIA (*eagerly*). Our hopes? We feared?

BART. Yes! She especially.

JULIA. *She*? Of whom are you speaking? Her name?

BART. Surely I must have mentioned it? Your sister.

JULIA (*starting from her chair*). Josephine!

BART. Yes; rejected by her elder sister, I sought and found solace and consolation in her goodness and sympathy.

JULIA (*with increasing anger*). So! Your frequent visits, your constant presence here, apparently so inconsistent with your "wounded feelings" (*satirically*), are now explained! It was for *her*! And I was to be kept in ignorance, to fancy, to believe, to hope——

BART. (*surprised*). Miss Templeton!

JULIA. I now understand this anxiety to dispose of my hand—this crowd of admirers thrown in my way! What mattered *my* feelings—*my* happiness? I was an obstacle to be removed! (*with increasing excitement*).

BART. I implore you——

JULIA (*stamping her foot*). Silence, sir!

Enter MRS. TEMPLETON hurriedly at R. H.

MRS. T. What is the matter here? Julia! what means this excitement—this agitation? Perhaps you, sir—(*to BARTON*).

BART. I am as much surprised as yourself, madam! I ventured to confide to Miss Julia my pretensions to the hand of her sister——

MRS. T. (*with a scream*). What? You had the *cruelty*, the *barbarity* to make such an avowal to her elder sister? (*advancing upon BARTON, who retreats*) to lacerate her feelings! to wound her pride!

JULIA. Yes! that's it! to wound my pride!

BART. But really——

MRS. T. Silence, young man! I remember what *my* feelings were when my younger sister was married before me. I was choking, sir! suffocating, sir! I turned positively purple! all sorts of colours, sir! And here is a little pert, forward chit, daring to follow her Aunt Dorothy Jane's example!—but here she comes (*Enter COLONEL from R. H. and JOSEPHINE from L. H.*) So, miss! (*advancing angrily on JOSEPHINE*), a pretty account I've heard of you! To mix yourself up at *your* age in a silly romance—a nonsensical love-intrigue——

COL. (*interfering*). But, my dear Martha——

MRS. T. (*turning sharply on him*). Hold *your* tongue, Cousin Samuel!

JOSEPHINE. But, aunt, if you'll only allow me——

MRS. T. But I *won't* allow you! (*to JULIA*). Keep up your spirits, poor persecuted victim!

JOSEPHINE. Victim? It seems to me that *I'm* the victim! Just as I thought I was going to be married and settled! (*beginning to sob, COLONEL tries to pacify her*).

MRS. T. Married and settled, indeed! A child—a baby like you! (*to BARTON*). After what has occurred, sir, you will see that your further presence under this roof——

BART. (*bowing*). I fully understand, madam!

MRS. T. Come, miss (*to JOSEPHINE*), follow me! (*JOSEPHINE about to speak*). Not a word! It is for *me* to speak, as you'll find I intend to do, and to some purpose. This way! (*making JOSEPHINE pass before her, she and JULIA follow her out at R. H.*)

COL. Wheugh! here's a pretty piece of business!

BART. Not satisfied with rejecting me herself, she carries her prejudice, her hate so far as to——

COL. Hate? nonsense! (*suddenly*). By Jove! I have it!—at least I think I have. What if she should feel a “sneaking kindness” for you after all?

BART. Pshaw!

COL. But what about friend Royston?

BART. Hang friend Royston!

COL. With all my heart; but where the deuce is he?

BART. Waiting somewhere or other to hear the result of my interview with Miss Templeton.

COL. In which you undertook to plead his cause—eh?

BART. Yes; and forgot all about it in my anxiety to plead my own!

COL. What's that? Do you mean to say you confided to her the secret between you and Josephine?

BART. Yes; trusting in her generous nature and her sisterly affection, I certainly *did*!

COL. And a pretty mess you've made of it! Well, I must find Royston and let him know. As for you, as you've received orders to march, the sooner you pack up and pack off the better! (*hurries out at c.*)

(*Door at R. H. opens and JOSEPHINE peeps in.*)

JOSEPHINE. Harry! Are you alone? Quite alone? (*hurries forward*).

BART. Yes. What is it?

JOSEPHINE. Such a discovery! (*in a very mysterious tone*). She's got one!

BART. She? Who?

JOSEPHINE. Julia!

BART. Got one? Got what?

JOSEPHINE. A young man! shut up in a box!

BART. In a box?

JOSEPHINE. Listen! After being well scolded by Aunt Martha, I followed Julia to her room! There she was, with a little open box before her, out of which she took something, looked at it, then pressed her lips to it and gave such a sigh! you might have heard it here! perhaps you did?

BART. Well?

JOSEPHINE. Then Aunt called her and she hurried out of the room, leaving the box on the table; and then—then—somehow or other—here it is! (*producing a small casket*). It looks as if there was a young man inside—I mean a portrait—doesn't it?

BART. You've not opened it? (*eagerly*).

JOSEPHINE. No! That's for Aunt Martha to do!

BART. Surely you would not betray your sister's secret—perhaps her happiness?

JOSEPHINE. Much she cared about *mine*, didn't she? Aunt Martha must and shall see it! (*going, BARTON stops her, the box falls on stage and opens*). There! there! how clumsy you are!

BART. (*picks up the box, and then suddenly starting*). What do I see?

JOSEPHINE. That's what I want to know! it is a portrait, isn't it?

BART. (*confused*). Yes! no! a mere fancy sketch, nothing more! (*taking miniature from box and hastily concealing it in his breast pocket*). Be persuaded by me! replace the box where you found it! (*giving box to her*).

JOSEPHINE. Mayn't I take just one little peep? not that I've an atom of curiosity!

BART. No, no!

JOSEPHINE. Well, if you insist on it.

BART. I do not *insist*, I beg, *implore* of you.

JOSEPHINE. Very well! (*hurries out at R. H.*).

BART. (*watching her out, then taking miniature out and looking at it*). My portrait! and what is written here? (*reading*). "From memory." What am I to think? Can I dare to hope that her indifference was assumed—that she ever loved me—that she loves me still? Can such happiness be mine? Dear, dear Julia. But zounds! what about Josephine? Poor little girl! I can't marry them both! What—what is to be done? (*walking up and down*). Will anybody tell me what's to be done?

(*Enter ROYSTON hurriedly at C.*)

ROYS. (*coming down*). Oh! here you are! I couldn't wait any longer! (*following BARTON up and down*).

BART. (*impatiently*). Don't worry! Don't bother!

ROYS. (*astonished*). Bother! when I want to thank you for introducing me to this charming, amiable family, and to tell you I don't despair of becoming one of it!

BART. What?

ROYS. In a word, I'm in love! There's no mistake about it! Over head and ears in love!

BART. What, sir? you persist in carrying on this absurd, ridiculous joke?

ROYS. Joke?

BART. Yes, sir, I beg to tell you, I'll not allow, I'll not permit you to annoy poor dear Julia—I mean Miss Templeton—with your unwelcome attentions, sir—your absurd importunities, sir!

ROYS. Miss Templeton? My dear fellow, she's nothing whatever to do with it! It's the other! the little one!

BART. (*joyfully*). Josephine?

ROYS. Yes!

BART. My dear fellow! Come to my arms! (*throwing his arms about ROYSTON, who struggles*). I congratulate you! I give you joy! Such a sweet, charming, amiable creature, brimful of talent, overflowing with tenderness. Come to my arms again! (*embracing ROYSTON again*).

ROYS. Then you'll speak for me—eh?

BART. Speak for yourself—here she comes.

(*Enter JOSEPHINE hurriedly at R.*)

JOSEPHINE (*stopping on seeing ROYSTON*). Mr. Royston.

BART. (*aside to ROYSTON*). Now then, speak out! don't be afraid! put on a sentimental look!

ROYS. (*assuming a very lackadaisical look*). This sort of thing! (*aloud*). Miss Josephine—I—I (*aside*). It's very awkward! if I only knew how to begin.

BART. (*aside to him*). Go on!

ROYS. Pardon my frankness, but it has been impossible for me to find myself in your charming society without being captivated—enchanted—by your fascinations, your—

JOSEPHINE (*surprised*). I thought it was my sister who—

ROYS. So it was! but she wouldn't have me! that's why I—

BART. (*hastily aside to him*). No! that won't do!

ROYS. (*shouting*). No! that won't do!

JOSEPHINE. (*still more astonished*). And you don't hesitate to address me in this language before—*pointing to BARTON*.

ROYS. Before my friend—my bosom friend—that I went to school with at Bagnigge Wells? Why should I? It is he who encourages me—who tells me to “go on.” You told me to “go on,” didn't you?

JOSEPHINE (*with intention and looking at BARTON*). But has it never occurred to you that you might have a rival?

ROYS. So much the better! I should make it my immediate business to sweep him off the face of the earth!

JOSEPHINE (*to BARTON, in a sarcastic tone*). And you, sir! you can listen with perfect calmness, indifference! have you nothing to say?

ROYS. Yes! have you nothing —?

BART. (*aside to him*). Hold your tongue! (*aloud and with affected solemnity*). Ah! who can anticipate events? How little do we know what a few hours may bring forth!

ROYS. Yes! how little do we know —!

BART. (*aside to him again*). Hold your tongue! (*aloud*). In a word, what if circumstances compel me to leave England for a considerable time?

JOSEPHINE. A considerable time?

BART. Yes; for two years at least—possibly more!

JOSEPHINE. Two or three years?

BART. Could I venture to hope that you would submit to such a tax on your goodness—your patience?

JOSEPHINE (*very quickly*). I should think not, indeed!

BART. (*aside*). She doesn't love me! Huzzah! (*aloud*). What course is, then, open to me? One—only one: to sacrifice myself to the happiness of my friend!

ROYS. (*grasping his hand*). Glorious creature!

JOSEPHINE. But what about your own happiness? It isn't likely you could give me up so quietly without some other reason—some other motive!

BART. I have *another* motive, which for your sister's sake you will respect! In a word, that portrait——

JOSEPHINE. In Julia's box? Yes. Well?

BART. Was *mine*! See! (*taking out portrait and showing it*).

JOSEPHINE (*exclaiming*). Yours? It is!

ROYS. Yours? It is!—(*bewildered*.)

JOSEPHINE. Then—then *you* are her young man after all?

ROYS. Yes. You are her young man——

JOSEPHINE. Of course; now I understand. Now I see it all.

ROYS. So do I! No I don't! At least, not *quite*.

Enter COLONEL hurriedly at c.

COL. (*singing as he comes in*). "See, the conquering hero comes." Victory! victory! Everything's settled; and now, my dear young friends (*shaking BARTON'S and JOSEPHINE'S hands*), you can get married as soon as you like.

JOSEPHINE

BART. } (*together*). Married?

ROYS.!

COL. Yes! I had a devil of a fight for it, but I've carried the day! Aunt Martha consents, Julia consents, everybody consents!

ROYS. I beg your pardon! I don't! (*shouting*). I forbid the banns!

Enter MRS. TEMPLETON, followed by JULIA at R. H.

JULIA (*aside, as she sees BARTON*). Still here!

JOSEPHINE. So, Aunt Martha! you've given your consent? And you too, Julia?

JULIA (*endeavouring to conceal her emotion*). Yes, Josephine, willingly, gladly! Can I be indifferent to your happiness? (*smiling sadly*).

JOSEPHINE (*aside*). How bravely she bears herself! (*aloud*). And yet, just now, you were so indignant, so angry with me?

JULIA. A momentary caprice, an unworthy jealousy! but no more of that. Kiss me, dear sister! (*kissing JOSEPHINE and moves away*).

JOSEPHINE (*aside*). A tear? But you won't suffer long, poor dear martyr! (*suddenly bursting into loud laughter*). Ha! ha! ha! *aside to COLONEL*. Laugh!

COL. (*forcing laugh*). Ha! ha! ha! (*aside*). Laugh!

ROYS. (*very loud*). Ha! ha! ha! (*aside*). I don't know what I'm laughing about.

MRS. T. What is the matter?

JOSEPHINE (*laughing again*). Ha! ha! ha! You don't mean to say you've all been taken in? Did you think we were in earnest all the time? Ha! ha! ha! (*aside to COLONEL*). Laugh!

COL. Ha! ha! ha!

ROYS. (*very loud*). Ha! ha! ha!

MRS. T. (*impatiently*). Josephine, I insist on your explaining this extraordinary behaviour, instantly!

JOSEPH. Nothing so simple. (*to COLONEL and BARTON*). There's no necessity for our carrying on this innocent little *jest* any longer, is there?

MRS. T. Jest?

JOSEPHINE. Yes; this harmless conspiracy to make everybody happy! Julia dear, it was to test your love for me that I pretended to be so very anxious to get married, which I wasn't the least little bit in the world (*with a sly look at ROYSTON*). I mean, I wasn't *then*! My fellow-conspirator, Mr. Barton, fearing that your rejection of him might proceed from a preference for another, joined in the plot, but very unwillingly, for it is you, Julia, you alone, that he has ever loved; you alone that he loves still!

MRS. T. What is it I hear?

BART. The truth, madam! (*to JULIA*). May I hope, or must I endure a second refusal!

JULIA. (*tenderly*). I suffered too much from the first, Harry (*giving her hand to BARTON*).

ROYS. (*aside*). That's *one* couple; but there's room for another (*to Mrs. Templeton*). Madam, I have the honour to solicit the hand of your younger niece, Miss Josephine!

MRS. T. With all my heart, Mr. Royston; that is, unless Josephine objects.

JOSEPHINE (*quickly*). But she doesn't! (*giving her hand to ROYSTON*).

BART. You see, Jonathan will be satisfied after all.

ROYE. Yes. But poor Sophia—(*sighing*).

BART. Hush! (*aside to FANNY, and slipping the portrait into her hand*). You'll put this portrait back in its place.

JOSEPHINE. She won't care to look at it now that she's got the *original*.

CURTAIN.

[For permission to act this piece apply to the Author by letter, to the care of MESSRS. KELLY & Co., 51, Great Queen Street, W.C.]

OXFORD MEMORIES.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "TWENTY YEARS IN THE CHURCH,"
"AGONY POINT," &c.

NOW-A-DAYS men speak of underhand bowling as "slows." Much of the old bowling might be so called, but Osbaldeston, Brown, Harvey Fellows, Kirwan and, above all, Marcon, were faster than any round bowler I have ever seen. As to Marcon, Henry Grace related to me that in one match he saw a young farmer come in with his bat over his shoulder saying, "Fast as he is, I'll have a crack at him." The first ball that came took his bat clean out of his hand and right through the wicket! So, the old delivery in reality admitted of the greater speed. Still, most of the old bowlers were slow. Budd, Beldham, Lord F. Beauclerc, and Lambert are the names most frequently seen in the old scores, and they were about the pace of Clarke. Clarke spoke of Lambert as a better bowler than himself, as also, he said, was Warsop, of Nottingham. Clarke, aged forty-seven, came forward about 1850, having long lain fallow, as superseded by Lillywhite and his school: and let those who think such a style, at least when brought to perfection, would in these days be hit out of the field, reflect that Pilch, Felix, G. Parr, Mynn, Caffin, and Joe Guy had all tried stepping in and free hitting, and were all obliged to treat his bowling with great care and respect. The Gentlemen had small chance against the Players in Clarke's day.

At Oxford we used to play an annual match with the town, including the Cowley ground bowlers. Once, when good bowling was unsuccessful, they put in Tailor Humphreys to bowl twisting sneaks, and the wickets fell faster than before Hoskings, one of the best of fast bowlers at that time. The old fast bowling required a very straight bat. In 1848-9, when I captained the North of Devon against the South and the Teignbridge club, men worth a hundred an innings in good county matches, we played the old fast bowling against their round, and in two matches we ripped them up for about twenty-five in each innings—four innings for a hundred runs! But our bowling was really good. My friend Cawston once took three middle stumps in one over! Of course this kind of bowling requires a very accurate pitch. Mr. Budd, one of the slows, like Clarke, I have seen pitch as true as possible almost every ball through a long innings. Clarke had naturally, from a crooked arm once fractured, almost too much

break on his balls, and he therefore always chose at Lord's the pavilion end for his balls to break against the hill. With the slope in his favour his break became too great.

With slows a deal of spin for break and an abrupt rise was necessary. Budd once bowled me out by a ball that rose over my shoulder and still fell on the wicket. Slows are still tried in good matches, sometimes very successfully, as with Humphrey, but save Clarke and Budd, who from the first practised nothing else, I have never seen any as accurate as they should be. Clarke for four years was never beaten off. He succeeded, though too old to field his own bowling well. This is indispensable for a slow bowler, "as also is it," said Clarke, "to be able to send in unexpectedly a good fast ball, to defend yourself when men take liberties with you." In my own play I have always thought I had an advantage in being well drilled with underhand bowling first. It necessitates a perfectly straight bat. Few men play quite straight—men remark it at once when a man does play quite straight—a good proof that such play is rather the exception than the rule.

Canon Rawlinson, then at Trinity College, was one of our eleven—a fair long-stop and a most heartbreaking bat. He would block by the hour: his runs must come of themselves. His play reminded me of a man who asked Pilch, "Shall I be out (a vulgar error) if I don't move my bat?" "No, sir, but you'll be out if you do." Many a shooter have I seen bowled which found Rawlinson's bat still unmoved in the block-hole. Still, by the course of time and the mere chances of the game, he was credited, in an M.C.C. match, with twenty-five runs against Bailey and Cobbett, two of the best bowlers of the day. I was once in a match with him, "The Wykehamists against the University," and when I had scored thirty he had scored five; but since if he had the first ball of an over he usually had all the four; he had three times as many balls as I had and ought to have scored not five, but about a hundred.

Charles Wordsworth, of Christchurch, before-named as good at everything, was a brilliant bat—a very free hitter. No University eleven, before or since, could ever have left him out, though in one eleven, in Mr. Mitchell's time, every man was known to be capable of fifty runs in a first-rate match. On the Magdalen ground we used to practise with six wickets along the upper side, facing, at a distance of about sixty yards, six along the lower side. Here we had twelve men batting, and twelve men between the rows bowling—no small number to be for hours daily in danger's way: I wonder they could escape serious blows. Men used to be very careless, but I never saw any accident of much consequence but a great many narrow escapes. A ball, hit fifty yards, once touched my hair.

As to accidents, I asked old Beldham, who played from the

end of the last century, and Caldecourt, who saw more play than any man from the time Beldham left off, and neither had ever seen any serious accident—none, at least, by which a man sustained lasting injury. The most painful was that of a son of Sir George Burrowes, who between the innings of a match at Lord's, was struck on the face from a very fast ball from a catapult which was being tried. Burrowes was about the place where a long-stop would have stood, and the ball bounded up from hard ground. Still, though the doctor feared the sight was gone, two years after he told me that he was little the worse. I can also speak favourably from my own long experience; so accidents must have been very few.

Summers, a good player in the Nottingham eleven, died four days after a blow on the head while batting at Lord's—and he did enough, by a journey to Nottingham, to render fatal any case of concussion. Many a man has been hit much harder than poor Summers, for he had no external mark of injury, but the shock broke a little vessel. This I heard from Alfred Shaw, who kindly watched over him from first to last, but could not persuade him to lie by and obey the doctor. I never heard of any other fatal case among men who played well enough to take care of themselves. But as to "all butts," they are numerous indeed. I have cut a ball for four runs, just shaving the grey head of an elderly gentleman at point—too elderly to be entitled to stand there; and, when I have been one of the twelve practising at Oxford, I have often warned men, and warned them in vain, to look out for my hard left-handed hits.

The worst accidents I have known have been from collision. Mr. Slade, an eminent dentist, had to take the benefit of his own art to replace teeth knocked out while running with another to catch a ball at Lord's. Mynn and Box once came into collision: both were too much hurt to play the Kent and England match of the year—the only match in twenty years played without Mynn. When two men run to catch the same ball, the captain should shout, "Stop, Smith, Jones has it;" but this is never thought of. R. Price, a celebrated Wykehamist, before-mentioned, I saw caught on the chin from the point of the awkwardly-extended bat of his partner while crossing in a run between wickets; his head was forced back so violently he fell senseless, and said a little more would have killed him. I knew a fatal case in a parish match—the batsman hit on the head by a long throw-in: I wonder more accidents do not occur in this way especially. Mr. Blackman, last year in a Sussex match, was hit hard by a pelt into wicket-keeper. He only rubbed his head, and directly went on playing; "too giddy to play," he said, and was soon out: but as good as ever for the rest of the match. There are few blows so hard that some heads cannot stand, and few blows so slight as not in some cases to kill, say, the doctors.

As to the choice of the University eleven, there was as much emulation in being chosen for this honour in my time as there is now; of course there always was, and always will be, a certain clique to prefer their own friends, where the claims of those outside the ring are not too apparent. Few had much chance who were not from Eton, Harrow, or Winchester. There was no Marlborough or Cheltenham college in those days, nor for seven years after. Even Rugby was little known for cricket, and when challenging Eton, Rugby is said to have had the reply: "Harrow we know, and Winchester we know, but who are ye?" The Marylebone match at Oxford, and a return at Lord's, were the only great matches. Remember, there was no railway. This made play between rival clubs very difficult. Posting and hotel expenses for young men still "drawing on the governor" were such that we had to consider the purse as well as the play in choosing an eleven. Generally some elderly gentleman gave a seat in his carriage to the young ones, and billeted them about at his friends' houses. Among these, the Rev. J. Prower, of Purton, was very hospitable. Our Lansdowne eleven was often too strong for his Purton friends, so we accused him of a deep design. Three of us were poisoned by an unwholesome crab at supper, and lay about the grass next day, showing all the hues of a green sickness, with three substitutes in the field—"sick unto death," almost, is the only expression to convey all we suffered from that horrid crab. One incident in that match I cannot forget. Mr. Pratt, starting too eagerly to run, was dodged out by Charlie Sainsbury, more for the fun of the thing than to win the game. Pratt was very discontented with this sharp practice. This discontent is too common, though a man is fairly out by the rules of the game, and by common sense too. "Very long after," said Charlie, "I met our old Purton friend at a match, and I'll be hanged if he didn't pitch into me for that 'put out,' though full twenty years after date!" That a man should make a feint to bowl, and without letting the ball go out of his hand, betray the batsman into a mistake, is childish play, I admit; but that when the batsman tries to take advantage and start too soon, you should not put him out, as by the rules of the game, I never could understand. Still, the practice has often raised a cry of unfair play. I remember a professional player who would have been hooted off the Marylebone ground had not Lord Frederic Beauclerc stood forward, and called out that the man was only playing the strict game, and did perfectly right.

On the Cowley or Magdalen ground we had no pavilion, only a long tent for dinner, under the victualling of a very remarkable man—a man who might have made a fortune at Oxford with common prudence, so popular was he and so well did he understand University men—"old King Cole." Few men will ever forget Cole's portly figure, his watch chain and

seals plumbing a perpendicular clear of his toes, standing before the tent. His fat was disease; about thirty at this time; he died before forty. Cole, though not an educated man like Mr. Randall before mentioned, had, like him, one great characteristic of a gentleman, which consisted in making himself quite at ease with his customers and his customers with him. Cole had decidedly sporting proclivities: he was always ready to make a bet either on a cricket match or on the Derby; and not a few men short of cash found Cole ready to lend. He afterwards kept the "Toy," at Hampton Court, failed and died there. No wonder Cole failed; though he was accused of giving only fifty pounds in cash and thirty pounds in wine for a hundred pound bill, his solicitor told me that was quite liberal for Cole, for he had been doing bills for himself on worse terms still!

Of course Cole was a very important personage in the University: he seemed to think it could hardly go on without him. It was "our eleven" and "our gentlemen" always. He would organize the coach for a race at Henley, or for one to take the eleven to Marylebone, and was to be seen with betting-book and pencil—common in those days—under the Pavilion at Lords. When Oxford played Cambridge in the first match in 1829, Cole met a similar character and equally important supporter on the Cambridge side—boasting in the most confident manner of his side. "Well," said Cole, "you seem to make so certain, but I'd take odds that two of our bats make more in one innings than all your eleven put together." "Done for £10 to £1." Cole won his bet—he was the sharper of the two. If one side scored more than the other, such a bet would frequently be won, for two bats often make most of the runs. Pooley, with the English eleven in New Zealand, enacted the part of the old soldier in a similar way; he betted that he would write against all the names of the twenty-two the scores they would severally make, and that in six cases he would be exactly right. He wrote 0, 0, 0 all the way down; of course there were six "duck's eggs" in this weak side.

I remember Mr. Ward saying, on the occasion of a Marylebone match, "See the progress of Oxford cricket. I used to play eleven of Marylebone against twenty-two of Bullingdon, and now the club must ask the boys for the odds of two professional bowlers on our side." From about this time the best bowlers used to be more hit about at Oxford and Cambridge than by the best elevens all the season after. So much depends on daily practice and on knowing the exact time of your own ground. In Mr. Mitchell's day at Oxford, the same side that scored four hundred at Oxford were down for less than eighty at Lord's. Grundy, at Oxford, on that day could do nothing; he said so true and easy was the ground a machine might be made to swing a bat and score there.

The clergy, as University men, were always strongly represented at cricket. Canon Rowsell, and the Rev. A. D. Wagner, at Cambridge, and the Rev. Emilius Bailey were all distinguished. Bailey made the longest public school score, 150 in an innings. Lyttleton, Garnier, Wright, and Grimstone were named, both of fathers and sons, in Oxford and Cambridge elevens. The late Rev. J. Ward, of Cambridge, was the son of the celebrated Mr. Ward, who scored 265, which was for many years the longest score, but it was against Norfolk, a weak side, with Budd given. Budd told me that Ward was missed an easy catch before he had made thirty.

Cricket at Oxford in my day, 1832-6, was more of a sport and less of a business than it now is. We had no cricket elevens from London to play us, and no Oxford and Cambridge match to select and prepare for—the match, 1829, being played before these annual matches. This was a very expensive match. The tent and table was open to all comers from Cambridge, and Cole's bill was a disagreeable surprise, above £400! Even contests of one college against another were rare; the reason was players were not so numerous. Christchurch used to play the University, but rarely did any other college challenge a rival.

The railway system made quite a revolution in cricket. To bring two elevens together was too difficult and expensive in the days of coaches and posting. Knowing this difficulty I was surprised to find a score (given in my "Cricket Field") of Sheffield against Nottingham, in 1772. How well established must the game have been in the northern counties before such a distance could be covered by an eleven in these days. Still the best cricket was till about 1840 confined to the southern counties. The Marylebone played no less than twenty-two of Nottingham about 1820. In the West of England, from Bath westward, there was not a club worth mentioning till 1824, when the Sidmouth played Teignbridge, just founded, as was the Lansdowne the year after; there was a Stalbridge club in Dorsetshire about the same time, but these were all. Scotland and Ireland had hardly seen cricket.

A FEW words as to how Alma Mater advanced from the humble position of a village dame to her present dignity of the mother of arts and sciences.

Not long after William and his Normans had begun to astonish the rude Saxons with French manners and the French tongue, a number of mere dominies began to congregate at where now is Oxford. A long street, called School Street, stretching from about St. Mary's up to Broad Street, became the seat of learning.

Mere huts, sheds, and garrets at first sufficed for these day-schools. But day-schools soon turned into boarding schools, drawing pupils from beyond walking distance, and were called *aule* or halls, some of which still remain, St. Edmund's, the least in reputation in my time, being the oldest, and all the halls being older in some primitive form than any college.

Soon we find the modern division of college men and residents, attached and unattached, under the name of Aularians and Chamberdikyns, or briefly, chums; and even as boarders in some schools now look down on day boys as a cheaper and a cad-dish set, so was it then. This feeling the masters of the halls rather encouraged, desiring a monopoly of all pupils and all teaching; so having formed themselves into a guild or close society, they made their own laws that there should be no chums—no students but those attached to a hall. This rule in time was relaxed a little, and chum ceased to be synonymous with cad.

The chum, not being under the discipline of halls, and under the check of no "gate bills," and fearing no proctors, soon bore deservedly a bad name as a riotous and degraded set. For says Antony Wood (in 1422) "about this same time the university (the guild) made a statute against such as, in the form of scholars, lurk in divers places within the university, who were neither of any hall or under the government of a principal, and by whom the peace of the university was disturbed. The university therefore ordered that all members that took commons in any college or hall should lodge within a hall on pain of imprisonment." The Irish students at this time were spoken of as "Irish beggars, who, in the garb and habit of poor scholars," show the danger of this freedom from college discipline, which this statute would enforce.

These private rules or statutes were in Henry V.'s reign enforced by law.

I spoke of guilds. In early times monopoly was soon voted for the good of their own blessed selves in every trade or calling. "How, otherwise," it was argued, "could people be protected from bad workmen and mere pretenders? For instance, without the honourable guild of leather-sellers, the stitches would give way in the badly-made small clothes, to the great damage both of purse and person."

In the same spirit the halls formed a guild, and combining together, voted themselves a university. In union they found strength, and thus Oxford took root in defiance of all the principles of free trade. When once this university obtained a charter, the Aularians had virtually the law at their back to enforce all their own private rules of licensed teachers, and find degrees or other devices for their own aggrandisement.

Halls existed long before colleges. Years after the time of

their foundation, the colleges took to teaching and boarding as employment too profitable to leave only to the halls, but at first a college was a private retreat for studious men without any pretence of university teaching. But colleges, as we said of Oxford generally, began in a very humble way. "University College," said Jeffreason, "had its beginning in a mean house provided for four masters, and no quadrangle!" Imagine a college, with this part—the quadrangle—left out! Merton was for twenty scholars and three chaplains; Oriel was originally for eleven foundationers; Queen's for a provost and thirteen fellows. But colleges soon took precedence from having early endowments in land, and consequent being honoured with aristocratic connections.

The association of schoolmasters existed about the year 1100, but it was not till the year 1200 that *Universitas* was sanctioned by a royal charter. "Still," says Jeffreason, "as might meant right in these days, the guild would have made short work, *pugnis et fustibus*, of any interloper who was bold enough to trespass on their trade.

As to how simply Oxonians fared in early times, we may judge from this that "Oxford fare" was a by-word for short commons, as we know from the following singular passage:

"My counsel is," said Sir Thomas More to his children after his fall, "that we fall not to the lowest fare first; we will not, therefore, descend to Oxford fare, nor to the fare of 'New Inn,' but we will begin with Lincoln's Inn diet, which, if not able to maintain, we will next year come down to Oxford fare, with which many great, learned ancient fathers and doctors are continually conversant."

As to the halls, New Inn Hall, though, as before related, without one member in very early days, takes rank among the oldest foundations in Oxford, with St. Edmund's, St. Mary's, and St. Alban's. In all social and scholastic respects, the halls differ in nothing from the colleges. Brown, of Christchurch, only shows his ignorance when he affects to look down on Smith, of St. Mary Hall. Aularians are every whit as good as collegians, and it shows great ignorance of the past to regard them as an inferior species of the academic genus.

Oxford was anything but a united or happy family in the fifteenth century. "Meet me with your friends at the 'Beaumont'" was the usual challenge for a fight with fists. The "Bellosite" or the "Beaumont"—Bellosite appositely so called from *bellum* and the wars waged there—was the playground that lay between Balliol and Worcester, and a place still noted by Beaumont Street. In the absence of cricket and boating, of which we read nothing in early times, jumping, racing, quoits and childish school games were in fashion. Feuds, which led to fights, were numerous from the many sects, divisions, and party feelings

of opposing counties and nationalities. The seculars fought the monks, and the monks fought rival brotherhoods; the Celts of Wales warred against the Saxons north of the Humber. When the shires were parcelled into groups, the prejudices of each division was *causa belli* to another.

Though two of a trade can rarely agree, says the proverb, even different trades and professions had their strife. "The old discord," says Antonius, "between the physicians and the lawyers broke out this year again—so dangerous and troublesome that complaints were made to the Archbishop of York." But the Northerners and Southerners were more hostile than even the Scotch and Irish factions. Nay, even academic questions became a cause of contention, and earnest logicians would break heads in defence of a major or a minor premise, and the Nominalists fought the Realists for defending their respective sophistries less by arguments than by knocks.

Antony Wood shows us that tricks on freshmen were known in his day—some two hundred years ago. The freshman was seated in hall; every one around was required to make a jest or say some clever nonsense. If the freshman made a dull speech, they would "kick" him, or with sharp nail give him a rude chuck under the chin. Then came a scene: the cook made pots of "caudle" at his charge, his share of the caudle to be salted if he did not, as usual, pluck off his gown and band and affect the low fellow, and make an amusing speech. These speeches were rarely as good probably as the following specimen by Antony Wood:

"Most Reverend Seniors,—May it please your gravities to admit into your presence a kitten of the Muses, and a mere frog of Helicon, to croak the cataracts of his plumbeous cerebrosity before your sagacious ingenuities. Expect not that I should thunder out demi-cannon words. I will not sublimate nor tonitruate sounds, for my Hippocrene is at the lowest ebb, nor will my brains evaporate into high hyperboles. I have not yet been fed with the pap of Aristotle, nor even sucked the dugs of Alma Mater."

From the following strain in which Wood continues it seems that men "read for the pot" even in those days: "I am not one of the University bloodhounds that seek for preferment, their noses as acute as their ears, that lie *purdue* for places. There are they who esteem a tavern as bad as purgatory, and wine more superstitious than holy water."

The "Oxford Sausage," also published in the middle of the last century, shows much of the manners and customs of the day. Blaggrave, like old John Sheard, was the job master; Glass and Nourse were the surgeons, like Tuckwell and Ogle of my time; Ben Tyrrell, the confectioner, the Tupper of the day; and Nell Bachelor, like old Mother Fletcher, the pie woman, all familiar

names of *Universitas*. Nell Bachelor is immortalized also by the following epitaph from "Oxoniana":

"Here deep in the dust,
The mouldy old crust,
Of Nell Bachelor lately was shoven,
Who was skilled in the arts
Of pies, puddings, and tarts,
And knew every use of the oven.

When she'd lived long enough,
She made her last puff—
A puff by her husband much praised ;
Now here she doth lie,
To make a dirt pie,
In hopes that her dust will be raised."

Anything like rough play in my time to compare with Antony Wood's experience was almost unknown, though the *Æsthetics* lately provoked it. There was nothing like *æstheticism* in my day at Oxford. One class of men used to read; the others to shoot, hunt, or row. Even music and drawing were rare, as resources in college. Athleticism stood in the place of *æstheticism*; even the word would have puzzled us. The temper of the times inclined rather to the manly than to the effeminate; though, while aware of the excess to which a love of china or sun-flowers may be carried, I can only greet those expressions of refinement as a taste well suited to qualify the roughness of days gone by.

Excess works its own cure, exciting a spirit against it. So, about ten years since, there was a disturbance at Oxford which was circulated far and wide in the daily papers.

A young *æsthete* had his room wrecked. His furniture and his china, his peacock feathers and his other tomfooleries had been reduced to ruin. It is urged on the other hand that he had so far forgotten himself as to speak disrespectfully of the college boat, and that his punishment was justly deserved. "The controversy," says a writer of the day, "is a very pretty one, and up to this moment it is being most acrimoniously carried on, and on the whole the oarsmen, blunt and soldier-like as is their diction, are getting the best of the dispute. The *Æsthetes* abuse them as Boeotians, and call them brutal, stupid, and ill-educated. To this the *Athletes* reply, with some promptitude, that there are more boating men to be found in the first class than are furnished by the *æsthetic* contingent, and one of their number goes so far as to make a very uncomplimentary remark of another kind. The sarcasm is one upon which we need not dwell, but it seems that the *Æsthetes* have gone rather out of their way to provoke it. Amidst all the coarseness and roughness of Oxford there runs a wholesome and manly dislike of everything that is sickly, mean, and effeminate, and there is also a tendency to associate effeminacy with other failings. The suspicion is on the whole not unfounded, and young men who are fond of feathers,

fans, and crockery had perhaps better seek some other place than an Oxford college for the gratification of their peculiar tastes."

It is too little considered that in early times our churches were made use of for secular as well as for religious purposes. Even after the Reformation, which did much to abolish this social use of churches, the Cantabs acted their "Aularia of Plautus" in King's College chapel, converted into a theatre, before Queen Elizabeth. Her Majesty attended service in the morning with Dr. Perore's Latin sermon, and the theatricals in the same place in the evening.

"Before this," says Jeffreason, "churches were places of promenade and jollity, also for warehouses for the farmers' sacks and the merchants' wares, to be safe in days of rapine from thieves and marauders. In short, the nave of the church was the common hall for all public business. Such buildings were too useful and too scarce to be reserved only for Sundays."

Since it is well known that in mediæval days in the nave of a church you might see the farmer's sacks left while service was done in the chancel, we cannot be surprised to hear that college exercises and celebrations were performed at St. Mary's before Archbishop Sheldon in 1664 instructed Sir Christopher Wren to build the Sheldonian Theatre. Strange to say, Evelyn informs us that though Dr. Sheldon had spent £25,000 on the work it was never seen by the benefactor—"my Lord Archbishop told me he never did or ever would see it."

NEW YEAR'S EVE.

AND canst thou pass with quiet mind,
 Old Year, to thine ill-doings blind?
 Or hast thou straightly charged thine heir,
 Faith to renew? Wrongs to repair?
 Of woe, or weal, what germs dost leave?
 Our hopes are high on New Year's Eve!
 The feath'ry snowflakes lightly fall,
 And earth and air seem one white pall;
 "Beyond these voices" hurrying hence
 He cannot speak in his defence;
 Soon nothing but a memory,
 More or less ancient history!
 Twelve on the dial points the hand,
 The bells are pealing through the land,
 "The New Year's risen," chants the choir,
 The son annihilates the sire!
 Who viewless takes his flight sublime
 A feather from the wing of Time!

E. H. H.

THE "EUMENIDES" AT CAMBRIDGE.

MANY, many years ago, in ancient Athens, which loved a joke at the expense of what it held highest and dearest as well as we do nowadays, a play called the "Frogs" was written by that most perfect comedian and unsparing satirist Aristophanes. In that play we are introduced to two great poets, Æschylus and Euripides, who are disputing in the world below as to which had written the best poetry. When, after many tests have been applied, the proposal is made to produce the works of each, Æschylus indignantly exclaims that he will then be the loser, for his works did not die with him like those of Euripides, and therefore he has none to produce.

There is exquisite humour in this passage, and a half-truth too. The works of Euripides did not die, it is true, but may still be found in this upper earth, to the great joy of those who can understand the pathos of

"Our Euripides the human,
With his droppings of warm tears,
And his handlings of things common,
Till they rose to touch the spheres."

As to Æschylus, if any proof were needed that he left his poems behind him, when he departed to the land of shadows, a sufficient one has just been given at Cambridge, where one of his plays, and by no means the most interesting, has drawn crowded audiences to seven performances, and many would-be spectators have applied in vain for admission.

The "Eumenides" of Æschylus is the third play of the trilogy called "Oresteia." All three plays deal with the history of the house of Agamemnon, a story that appears to have had a wonderful fascination for the Greek mind. The Greeks were great believers in heredity. They thought that the sins of the fathers should be visited, to the third and fourth generation. If some ancestor had committed a great crime against the gods, all his descendants were accursed until one of them should expiate the guilt and propitiate the angry powers. Agamemnon came of an ill-starred race. His great-grandfather, Tantalus, who had sat at the table of the gods, had grown insolent and committed crimes that drew on him the terrible punishment by which his name has become immortalized. Pelops, his son, continued the career of crime and

punishment. Agamemnon, after besieging Troy for ten years, was murdered on his return home by his wife Clytemnestra, and this return and murder form the subject of the "Agamemnon," the first of the three plays. The second continues the tragic story. Clytemnestra in her turn is murdered by her son Orestes in revenge for his father's death. This second murder is depicted in the "Choephææ." The "Eumenides" completes the story and ends the tragedy; it brings forgiveness to Orestes and peace to the race. Nay, more, it brings a reconciliation between the ancient gods who reigned before Zeus, the infernal deities who exacted a life for a life, and knew no mercy, and the gentler gods of a later day, who were kind and pitiful to mortals, and fair to look upon.

The "Agamemnon" was acted some years ago by Oxford undergraduates, and was much appreciated by all who saw it. The "Eumenides" does not possess the dramatic force and the powerful situations of the "Agamemnon." When read it is even a trifle dull, which may be attributed to the fact that it is partly written with a purpose, and this purpose one connected with Athenian politics only, to strengthen the waning influence of the "Areopagus."

The Eumenides, or gracious goddesses, as the Greeks, who feared to provoke evil by the use of ill-omened words, preferred to call them, are more commonly known to us by the name of Furies, and we regard them as the Greek personification of conscience which pursues the evil-doer and will not let him rest. It is these Furies that form the chorus of the play, and part of the interest and excitement aroused when it was first announced that this play was to be acted at Cambridge is due to the general wonder as to how fifteen peaceable modern undergraduates would render the part of these weird sisters with snaky locks, who pursue the guilty murderer, with intent, when they have caught him, to suck his blood. The problem was solved, wisely it seems to us, by moderating the horror. Their faces were of a ghastly paleness, it is true, their hair hung down in dishevelled locks, and snakes were wound about their bare arms, but still they were allowed to retain a certain dignity and grandeur which help us to remember that they too were goddesses, and fulfilling a divinely-appointed mission. Indeed, before the play is over we become almost fascinated by these horrible forms, and find that, weird and almost grotesque as they are, they can stir in us that pity and terror which are said to be the very essence of tragedy.

The curtain rises, though to be truly classical it should have fallen, on the terrace before the temple of Apollo at Delphi. The Pythian prophetess enters in the exact garb of a priestess with wreath and fillets, and prologizes in a long speech concerning the genealogy and attributes of Apollo; she then enters the temple, but immediately after returns in horror, for there she has seen Orestes as a suppliant, and the Furies lying in wait for him.

The interior of the temple is next discovered, and here we are introduced to the Furies, asleep and muttering. They lie huddled up in corners of the temple in strange attitudes; and in the centre, turning every now and then a look of scorn at the dark and terrible visitants, stands Apollo. Clad in crimson and gold, his quiver over his shoulder, his bow in his hand, he seems to us a perfect representation of the sun-god,

"The far-darting Apollo."

The part was excellently sustained by Mr. Pollock, of King's. Nothing could have been better than the scornful gaze he turned on the grim figures, or the kind protecting smile with which he regards his suppliant.

At his feet kneels Orestes, and Apollo promises him help. Let him go to Athens, and kneel before the ancient image of Athene; there he shall find deliverance. Orestes departs, conducted by Hermes, and Apollo leaves the scene to the Furies.

Then the ghost of Clytemnestra appears, a majestic form clad in ashen grey, a little too life-like perhaps in some of her gestures, but horrible enough to make us shudder. She rebukes and awakens the Furies, who, when they find that Orestes has escaped, lament as follows:

"Deceived! deceived! deceived!
How shall it be retrieved,
The chase forwasted and the victim reaved?
Cunning and keen the theft,
Leaving us prize-bereft
To vain lamenting.
The net that clipped the booty
Slipped it clean away;
For sleep surprised our duty,
Loosed the prey!"

"What here, what here, false Phœbus?
False and a thief thou art,
Whose youth doth rudely ride
Above our ancient pride.
Mothers may bleed; thy part
Is with the murd'rer, heart
And soul consenting.
Such saving mercy thine,
Such clemency divine!
What dost, false Phœbus, then, what dost thou here?"

And as they sing they descend to the lower stage, where as a chorus they properly belong. Apollo re-enters and bids them depart. They refuse, and at last he challenges them to meet him at Athens, where their right to punish Orestes shall be decided. The curtain then falls on Act I.

Act II. brings us to Athens. Within the temple of Athene on the Acropolis, is seen an archaic wooden statue of the goddess. To this Orestes clings, and prays the goddess for deliverance. Now

enter the Furies one by one, and we begin to feel the horror of the situation as, like hounds, they track the fugitive by the scent of blood. When they perceive him, they call on one another to a terrible binding hymn, which is to bring Orestes into their power.

"Sing, then, the spell,
Sisters of hell;
 Chant him the charm
 Mighty to harm,
 Binding the blood,
 Madding the mood;
Such the music that we make;
Quail, ye sons of men, and quake,
Bow the heart, and bend, and break!
 Nor prayer
 Nor passion heed we, nor despair;
Nor reek of ritual, being no gods of heaven
Or earth, but sundered from such life and rivers,
Shrouded apart in a marvellous dread,
A mystery unto quick and dead!"

What the Greek music to this hymn was, we have no means of knowing, but certainly chanted to the accompaniment of Mr. Stanford's music it was most impressive. Before the hymn begins, Orestes, who still kneels before the statue, calls on the real Athene to appear, and at his request she comes.

The entrance of Athene is an important moment in the play. It is she who must at last decide the great question of Orestes' guilt, and determine whether it may ever be right to commit one wrong in revenge for another. To our modern sympathies the Eumenides were distinctly in the right, but we are led at last by the poet to rejoice that the gods do give their forgiveness to the criminal, whom they had urged to sin.

The part of Athene gives little scope for action, and yet the goddess is the central figure in the play. It is necessary, therefore, that the part should be sustained with grace and dignity, and both these qualities were conspicuous in Miss Case's acting. In her long flowing garment, the aegis on her arm, her head crowned by a helmet and plumes, a spear in her hand, she fitly represented the Athene of many a Greek statue. She listens to the woes of Orestes, and to his prayer for mercy, and to the complaints of the Furies, who claim him as their rightful prey since he has committed murder, and punishment must follow sin. And we, much as we hate those horrid snaky creatures, cannot but feel that they are right when they tell us how the good shall go free, and the wrong-doer shall suffer:

"Give to Fear her proper seat.
Still to watch the wanton thought,
Let her sit, as just and meet.
 Sigh and tear,
Wisdom must with these be bought,

If in all the selfish soul
Mixeth ne'er a drop of dread,
How shall man himself control?
Wherewithal shall men be led?"

Act III. brings us to the Areopagus at Athens. Here Orestes is to be tried on a charge of murder, and an Athenian audience is thereby to be impressed with the grandeur and antiquity of the court of Areopagus, which in the time of Æschylus they were beginning to treat without due regard. That was when Athens was growing into a thorough democracy, and the court of Areopagus, a stronghold of aristocracy, was beginning to lose its influence. If its origin could be proved divine, that would go a long way with the god-fearing Athenians. An English audience is impressed rather by the excellence of the scene and grouping, the dignity of Athene as president of the court, and the eager sympathy of the chorus with their leader when she cross-examines the culprit, and extracts from him the confession of guilt. The twelve elders who are to vote sit on either side of Athene. The chief of the chorus questions and accuses Orestes, and he allows his guilt, but pleads the command of the gods. By his side stands Apollo, looking more beautiful even than before, now that he comes as witness and protector. Then a large urn is brought on, the elders one by one drop their votes in it, expectation reaches its height; the lots are counted and prove equal, and Athene gives the casting vote for Orestes. With a cry of thanksgiving, echoed by each one of the audience, Orestes turns to the goddess, and then departs, free from the curse for evermore.

Here ends the story of Orestes, and the tragic tale of the house of Tantalus, and here, too, the play might end, were not the *Eumenides* really the principal personages in it. They must not depart in wrath, for that would bring evil fortune to Athens, and Athene's task is not done till she has succeeded in conciliating them. Baulked of their prey, they give vent to their wrath in angry songs, accompanied by wild rhythmic dances. With gentle words the goddess tries to propitiate them. They are not beaten, she says, for the votes were equal; they shall not be slighted; let them stay in Athens, and a temple shall be assigned to them, and due honour paid them. It seems strange to us that Athene should desire such visitants in her beloved city, but perhaps even stranger that they at last consent.

Then the music changes from harsh anger and terror to gentle sweetness, as the Furies answer:

"So 'tis well!
Here, O Pallas, will we dwell!
Athens, whose high-honoured steep
Almighty Zeus and Ares keep,
Be ours the sacred citadel;
Pride of heaven, where all combine,
Whom Hellas holds divine,
To shield one common shrine."

Then attendants enter bearing lighted torches, and lead the Furies to their new home, while the play ends with a note of joy and peace.

"Pour the symbol of peace, for our peace is made,
Fate is contented,
Zeus hath assented,
On such pact is our concord stayed."

Strange and weird as this story is, the play holds us spellbound to the last moment, and it is not till we have left the hall and the impression begins to grow dim that we can venture to criticise. The acting was all that could be desired. Mr. Macklin as Orestes was not so fascinating and captivating as when he acted the part of Tecmessa in the "Ajax" three years ago, but then the part of Orestes, always a fugitive and a suppliant, gives less scope for dramatic feeling. Apollo and Athene were all but faultless, and the chief of the chorus deserves high praise. But a play of which the heroes are gods and goddesses lacks human interest, and in spite of the excellent scenery, of the archæological perfection of the arrangements, and the splendid music written for the occasion, we venture to think that this is not the most successful performance hitherto given at Cambridge. Why should not the University attempt the "Antigone," a play so full of dramatic power and human interest? But it is ungrateful to find fault where so much is supplied, and we would rather close with a word of thanks to actors and managers who have done so much to bring before our eyes a notion, however dim, of

"That glory men call Greece."

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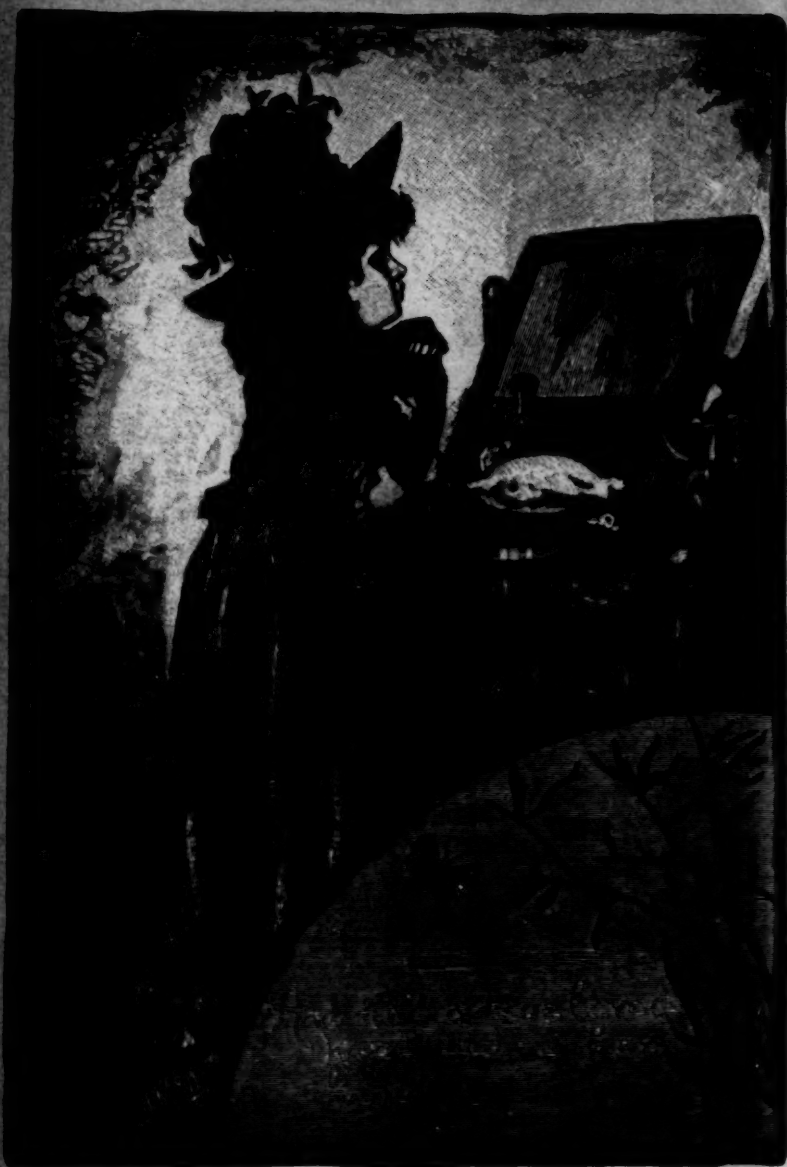
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" And I will make a promise, dears,
That will content you, may be :
I'll love you through the happy years,
Till I'm a nice old lady !

True love (like yours and mine) they say
Can never think of ceasing,
But year by year, and day by day,
Keeps steadily increasing."

From "A LITTLE GIRL'S FANCIES."